

Curiosities And Contradictions
A Printmaker's Exploration of Environmental
Concerns Using Historically Derived Imagery

by

Yvonne Rees-Pagh

Graduate Diploma of Arts (Visual Arts) Monash University
Master Of Visual Arts Monash University

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

University of Tasmania

March 2007

This exegesis contains no material that has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution except by way of background information duly acknowledged in the exegesis. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it incorporates no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

YVONNE REES-PAGH

MARCH 2007

This exegesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

YVONNE REES-PAGH

MARCH 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor Milan Milojevic
His advice, assistance and support has helped me realise this project.

I thank John Robinson for his technical assistance in screenprinting

I am especially grateful to Ona Kaukenas for editing this thesis,
her knowledgeable guidance has been invaluable

I would also like to thank David Hughes, Mohd Fauzi Sedon
and Ona Kaukenas for helping me install the final exhibition.

I thank all of my family and friends for being there for moral support.

I am eternally grateful to my partner Bevan, who has been patient,
caring and supportive throughout the duration of the project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the memory of Ron Waddell, who first taught me printmaking.
His tuition instilled in me my love and respect for this wonderful medium.

CONTENTS

Abstract 01

Introduction 02

Chapter One: The Central Argument

 Aim of the project 03

 Nature 04

 Ornamental organisms 05

 A dark memory 06

 The Wunderkammer: A theatre of memories 07

 The art of natural history illustration 12

 Edward Topsell 13

 Maria Sibylla Merian 14

 Albertus Seba 14

 Ernst Haeckel..... 15

 Echoing the curious and the marvellous 18

Chapter Two: The Context of the Project: Related Art Practices

 Preamble 21

Nature and Art

 Osmo Rauhala 22

Wunderkammer: Curious connections

 Mark Dion 25

 Rosamond Purcell 28

 Kiki Smith 30

Natural history illustration

 Walton Ford 32

 Philip Taaffe 34

Chapter Three: How the Investigation was Pursued

 Previous work 35

 My printmaking practice 35

 The origins of the project 36

 Development of the project 38

 The transition to new work 42

 The exhibition..... 47

Chapter Four: Conclusion 49

Appendices

 Bibliography 50

 List of illustrations 53

 Curriculum vitae 56

ABSTRACT

The project investigates the role of artwork as a medium with the potential to stimulate environmental awareness. The initial research focuses on ideas and visual imagery sourced from the Wunderkammer, cabinets of curiosities and natural history illustration, towards embracing them in my printmaking. My own perception of nature is not a utopian one. I am always conscious of the point where human endeavour touches and disrupts the natural world, causing some form of change. My work, in trying to address these changes to the natural world, uses the Wunderkammer as a metaphoric device to provoke thought on the process of environmental change, providing the opportunity to reflect on the permanence of loss, and perhaps the profound personal urge to recover the irretrievable.

The investigation follows on to examine selected contemporary artists whose work addresses environmental concerns, or who have been influenced by the phenomena of the above investigations. In the pivotal area of nature, art and environmental issues I discuss the Finnish artist Osmo Rauhala, whose work strongly addresses ecological concerns. The influence of the Wunderkammer is explored in the work of Mark Dion, Kiki Smith and Rosamund Purcell. The picturing of natural history and influence of historic natural history illustration is examined in the work of Walton Ford and Philip Taaffe. All of these artists are influenced by their own cultural background and personal concerns.

My printmaking for the project employs multi-layering combined with expressive mark making and surfacing. It is a process of transformation that brings together elements of time, memory, creation, distortion and obliteration. The work develops from abstraction to a more narrative style through the superimposition of imagery drawn from my research. The layered images work in opposition to one another, setting up visual responses where relationships, despite ambiguity, are open for interpretation.

The final presentation employs the Wunderkammer analogy as a strategy for display. The works are assembled in a 'cabinet of curiosity' configuration, the intent being to juxtapose the individual works in order to increase ambiguity, and create an added sense of wonder and awe. My overall purpose is to provide a visual stimulation that will be both aesthetic and provocative.

INTRODUCTION

Visual artists have always looked to nature for artistic inspiration. This is a somewhat obvious statement in that all visual imagery can only be drawn from visual experience of the material world. However the process of natural history¹ investigation, particularly from the Renaissance period on, has produced a vast array of visual imagery derived from nature, providing supplementary images which cannot be seen by personal visual observation exemplified in the extreme by the microscopic view of the atom and the macroscopic picture of the far-flung universe. Images such as these expand the scope for artistic inspiration from the 'seen' to include the 'unseen'.

Against this backdrop is my personal concern in relation to ecological issues, such as the plight of endangered species, and my desire to create meaning within my work that gives underlying expression to these concerns. This is not to say that I seek to pursue art as a political voice and protest, but rather art for its own irrational sake, with a soft narrative undercurrent. As an artist my aim is to produce evocative images that will stimulate the imagination of the viewer, and prompt the viewer to contemplate the environmental concerns I am seeking to address.

The thesis is divided into three main chapters and a conclusion. I prelude chapter one with a statement on the aims of the project, and an overview of my personal motivation. There follows a general discussion in relation to senses and perception in nature. The thrust of my research focuses upon the phenomena found in the Wunderkammer and the natural history illustration books that flowed from these phenomena. A discussion follows on the influence of these historical phenomena on the works of early twentieth century Surrealists.

Chapter two presents two broad areas of discussion. The first part examines the contemporary artist Osmo Rauhala, who expresses ecological concerns similar to my own in his writings and work. The second part examines the works of contemporary artists whose work is influenced by the Wunderkammer and natural history imagery.

Chapter three discusses how the project was pursued. The development of the work is discussed; this stage resolved where I was heading. The latter part discusses in detail the final work, and the strategy employed for the display of the work in the exhibition.

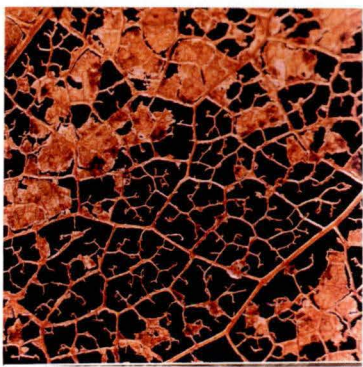
The final chapter provides a conclusion, summarising how the project realised its aims through the ultimate selection of works and their arrangement for the exhibition.

¹ **natural history** n. 1. the science or study dealing with all objects in nature. 2. the aggregate of knowledge connected with all such objects. (The Macquarie Dictionary)

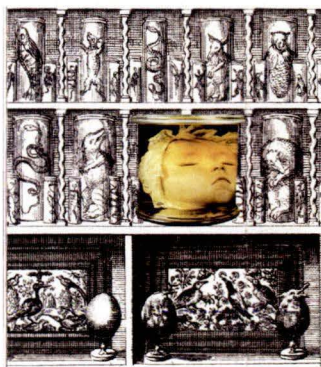
CHAPTER ONE: THE CENTRAL ARGUMENT

Aim of the project

The aim of this project is to explore the potential of using historically derived imagery in creating a narrative that expresses aspects of my environmental concerns, through the medium of printmaking. The ideas and visual imagery have been sourced from contemporary scientific imagery, the Wunderkammer², cabinets of curiosities and natural history illustrations. Within this contextual framework are placed my own environmental concerns. My perception of nature is not a utopian one. I am always conscious of the point where human endeavour touches and disrupts the natural world, causing some form of change. My work, in trying to address such disruptions, strives to use a subtle ambiguous language, at times not immediately readable. Like a puzzle, it needs to be worked out, making curious connections between old images and new ideas.



1. Leak skeleton (magnolia leaf)
Microscope photograph.
Magnified x 20³.



2. Levin Vincent Wunderkammer.
Published 1706.



3. Ernst Haeckel.
Discomedusae.
Coloured lithograph.

My research has explored the methodology and visual imagery of the Wunderkammer, and the imagery of natural history illustration throughout history. I have paid particular attention to the historical illustrations by Edward Topsell (1572-1625), botanist Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), Albertus Seba (1665-1736) and Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). I also examine the influence of this imagery on the Surrealist movement, in the context of the work of Max Ernst (1891-1976) and Joseph Cornell (1903-72).

The research is framed by the following questions. Can printmaking, based on the appropriation of historically derived imagery, be effective in conveying a narrative on environmental concerns? What possibilities do the Wunderkammer and the cabinet of curiosity methodology and display systems offer to the exhibition of my work?

² Wunderkammer is the German word for "miracle chamber". In the context of this thesis it is used as a term to generally include other descriptions such as cabinets of curiosities, wonder rooms, et al.

³ Amanda Renshaw ed. *Heaven & Earth: Unseen by the naked eye*. Phaidon Press: New York, 2002, 114.

Nature

Nature has historically been a profound influence on the arts. Many artists find their main inspiration in nature, and through this process establish their personal relationship with nature. The manner in which the artist has contemplated and connected with nature has fluctuated throughout history.

In attempting to understand nature, visual perception of nature has not always led to a literal and rational analysis in interpretation of the experience. Emotions often dominate over rationality, an approach often leading to a more romantic and spiritual expression of the experience based on intuition, insight, ecstasy, and even mysticism.



4. Lizard-like Aboriginal rock painting.
Hawker, South Australia.⁴

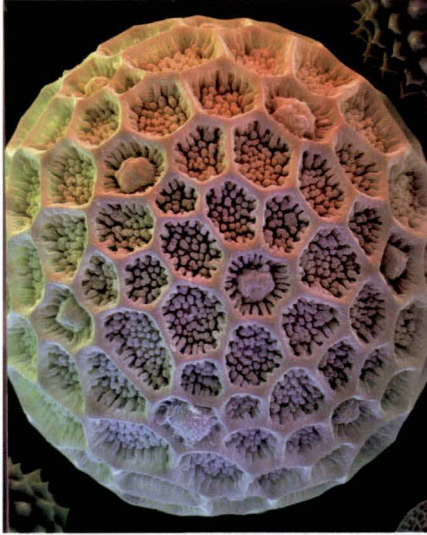
Art and nature have been inextricably linked ever since prehistoric man began gouging and painting on cave walls. The prehistoric images of animals and plants can be perceived to be like pages in a natural history book. The motivation that inspired them cannot be ascertained, but they certainly present images of alluring ambiguity. We can only guess at the symbolic significance of these images; perhaps they are a form of research, enumerating as it were a list of existing species, or perhaps they are symbolic expressions of a ritualistic or magical nature. Either way, they stand as silent and eloquent testimony to the desire to express the natural world in an artistic medium.

Before science, the world of nature was imbued with symbolic meanings by many cultures. They became connected to myths and legends; they arose out of our need to explain the world in which we live. Referencing these symbolic meanings in my work poses the following questions. How important are these meanings to us today when we are becoming increasingly detached from nature? Can these meanings be used as an effective language to address ecological problems? Are not the readings of these symbols conditioned by our cultural heritage?

⁴ Hans-Georg Bandi. *The Art Of The Stone Age*. Methuen: London, 1961, 223.

Ornamental organisms

*Only three things exist for the creative mind: here am I, here is nature and here is the object I am going to embellish.*⁵



5. Knotweed pollen (*Polygonum*).
Electron micrograph.⁶

The invention of the microscope in the mid 17th century enabled artists to access the wondrous world of the unseen in nature as inspiration for their work. This unseen world became part of visual perception. The microscope opened up a world full of wondrous shapes and structures; it created a window into the unknown and became a tool for artistic investigation. The micro-organisms thus revealed have been used by artists for inspiration, often for their surreal appearance. Representation often tends towards adaptation of the organism's form; the organism may, in the process, become divorced from its scientific context.

Lynn Gamwell makes an interesting visual comparison when she writes:

*Images of micro-organisms made with an achromatic microscope became for the mid to-late nineteenth century public what celestial images recorded by the Hubble Space telescope are today.*⁷

She observes that the magnified view conveys an extraordinary sense of being transported to another realm; an exotic realm tinged with a bit of danger. It is unknown, exquisitely beautiful and sexy; watching magnified microbes slithering on a glass plate reproducing themselves is slightly voyeuristic, but fascinating.

My initial work drew inspiration from the microscopic realm of nature revealed in contemporary scientific imagery. It initially took me on a magical mystery tour into the microscope. I strove through abstraction to avoid mere pictorial representation of the images, seeking a visually aesthetic outcome. My pursuit in this direction waned as I struggled to imbue meaning into the images I created.

Experimentation with process and technique yielded limited success. However, at this point a personal encounter with a Wunderkammer took my research and my work in a new direction.

⁵ Ernst Haeckel. *Art Nouveau*. Fahr-Becker Konemann: Köln, 1997, 12.

⁶ Amanda Renshaw ed. *Heaven & Earth: Unseen by the naked eye*. Phaidon Press: New York, 2002, 40.

⁷ Lynn Gamwell. *Exploring the Invisible: Art, Science and the Spiritual*. Princeton University Press: USA, 2002, 16.

A dark memory

As a child living in Yorkshire I often visited Old Mother Shipton's Cave in the nearby town of Knaresborough. Mother Shipton⁸ was considered a witch and was born and lived in a dark, damp cave. After seeing this mysterious cave I came to the realisation that there existed another world; a world of magic, and wonder.



6. Old Mother Shipton's Cave
Knaresborough, Yorkshire

In her time Mother Shipton gathered all types of animals, plants and discarded objects that she hung from the roof of her cave. After her death this tradition was carried on by people who donated items to this 'collection', and so it grew. Through the porous stone of the cave, water dripped onto the dangling possessions, and over time they became petrified into stone. The cave ceiling became a massive installation of calcified objects, mimicking in some strange way the sculpted interior of a Gothic Cathedral. I remember the sight of this strange silent abode with its eclectic arrangement of petrified things: distorted animal bodies, bunches of herbs and plants, all of which hung next to the detritus of human culture. Over time these had

turned into a ceiling of unnatural stalactites. I have often pondered about this old woman and the way she had gathered together her natural and unnatural booty, dangling haphazardly from her cave ceiling. I think about the way nature has reclaimed Mother Shipton's dangling possessions by slowly transforming them into stone. I still feel a sense of wonder and awe in remembering this cave.

I was to feel this very same sense of wonder and awe when, in 2005, I visited a Wunderkammer for the first time - the Kunstkammera in St. Petersburg. This nightmarish collection of natural curiosities placed bizarre bottled foetal abnormalities in theatrical juxtaposition alongside such exhibits as platypus, echidna and exquisite coral formations. What was the connection between these two wonderful and awesome experiences? Upon reflection, Old Mother Shipton's cave and the Wunderkammer act as metaphors for the unknown; both embody a narrative, waiting to be understood. This reflection led to my exploring the phenomenon of the Wunderkammer.

⁸ Mother Shipton (1488-1561) is the most famous prophetess of the British Isles. She is one of the many figures of romance who achieved widespread fame and notoriety many years after the real exploits of their lives have faded from the pages of history. (http://www.crystalinks.com/mother_shipton.html)

The Wunderkammer: A theatre of memories

Most of us can remember the childhood excitement of visiting a museum and seeing the dioramas of stuffed animals posed awkwardly in artificial environments mimicking the time when they were alive. Huge glass cabinets display nature's wares, from dinosaur skeletons to strange artefacts from exotic places, all unveiling a veritable potpourri of visual delights and wonder⁹.

It was Plato who designated wonder as the cause of knowledge, and as the basis of cognition¹⁰. Plato's statement draws a direct connection between the use of one's mind and the wonders displayed in nature. The writer Edith Cobb describes wonder as the essential instrument for creative thought:

*The ability of the adult to look upon the world with wonder is thus a technique and an essential instrument in the work of the poet, the artist, or the creative thinker.*¹¹

Wunderkammer, the wonder rooms, were collections of natural history artefacts kept by many early practitioners of science in Europe, and are recognised as the precursors to the natural history museum. They displayed an almost encyclopaedic representation of the known world, with objects deliberately chosen for their intrinsic beauty, rarity, meaning and value. The idea underlying these collections was that they attempted to encompass the results of God's creation, 'nature', with that of man's creation, 'art'.



7. Wunderkammer Siciliana 17th C.
Galleria Regionale della Italian Sicilia-Palermo.

*Before the Renaissance was born
Curiosity was scorned
as part of human pride.
But with the new age,
Curiosity raged,
And the cabinets opened wide.*

*Upon unlocking the cabinet door,
All was visible
Ceiling to floor,
Every inch a wonder
At a single gaze,
A collection of oddities
Arranged to amaze...*¹²

⁹ **wonder** v.i. 1. to think or speculate curiously; 2. to be affected with wonder; marvel. 4. to be curious about; be curious to know. 5. to feel wonder at. 6. something strange and surprising; a cause of surprise, astonishment, or admiration. 7. the emotion excited by what is strange and surprising; a feeling of surprised or puzzled interest, sometimes tinged with admiration. (The Macquarie Dictionary).

¹⁰ Plato. *The Dialogues of Plato*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1953, 1-4.

¹¹ Edith Cobb. *Wonder as the Genesis of Knowledge*. Columbia University Press: New York, 1977, chap 2.

¹² A Cabinet of Curiosities, The New York Public Library: 2002, exhibition catalogue, 2.

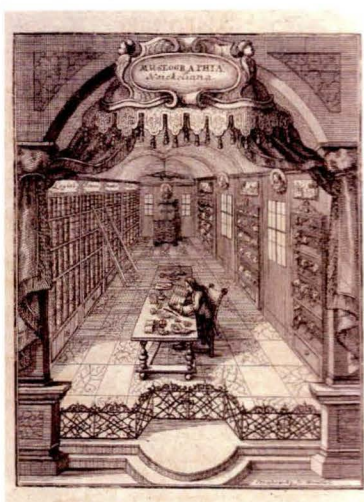
The fashion for Wunderkammer began in the Renaissance. The arrangement of objects within cabinets can be perceived both as decorative and as disparate but, notwithstanding, the order of the objects soon reflected the then contemporary views on cosmology ¹³. It was this apparent contradiction between disparity and order that was becoming ever more complex with new scientific and geographic discoveries; the ideal cabinet constituted an attempt to produce an overall picture of the world and the cosmos. Natural history collections became tools of empirical research. For example a 17th century Wunderkammer might have included plant and animal specimens, minerals, coins, relics, anatomical models, body parts, and medical instruments.



8. Olaus Worm.
Musei Wormiani Historia. 1665.
Original copper engraving

The world in miniature (microcosm) stood for the wider world (macrocosm) and the cabinets operated like an art installation representing the wider world, much of which was still unknown to most people in that time. These cabinets consisted of a room, or rooms, where assemblages of historical and natural curiosities were arranged in glass cabinets. The intent was to give aesthetic pleasure to the viewer and to arouse their curiosity.

They were part of a fascination with the unknown that we now call science. The cabinets gave the noble collector a sense of mastery over the foreign, the alien and the new. They allowed viewers to ponder on possible connections between the unrelated displayed objects. Like a time machine they transport the mind to far and exotic places.



9. Caspar Friedrich Neikel.
Museographica. 1727.

By the 18th century it became fashionable to collect different wonders of nature; natural specimens were called 'naturalia' and objects of human workmanship 'artificialia'. These would sit together in arrangements created to give a sense of wonder and awe¹⁴.

In the late 18th century the drive to systematise just about everything took the upper hand; Wunderkammer lost their relevance. Contents were re-examined and catalogued according to the latest taxonomic principles. The focus was no longer on exceptions but rather on showing common characteristics.

¹³ Cosmology is the branch of astronomy that concerns itself with origin, evolution and general structure of the universe, its parts, elements and laws, especially such characteristics as space, time and causality.

¹⁴ Patrick Mauries. *Cabinets of Curiosities*. Thames & Hudson Ltd: London, 2002, 23.

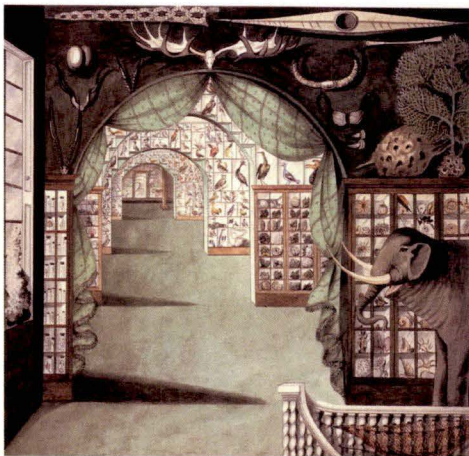
Finally, in the 19th century, most of the cabinets were disassembled and the contents relocated to various museums and private collections. At this time 'art' and 'nature' were strictly separated; it was deemed to be the more progressive view at the time.

Even with our current knowledge of nature we are still drawn to these strange exhibits and the way they were displayed. Questions arise about the possible meanings that can be construed from these things that are assembled and juxtaposed together. The writer Louise Lippincott discusses their still potent allure:

*Today we look at these cabinets of curiosities with awed fascination. We are puzzled by the chaos of their arrangement or by the decorative displays that go completely against our understanding of the laws of nature. In recent years, both historians and artists seem to have rediscovered the power of seemingly chaotic arrangements. The boundaries of our thinking about nature are continuously shifting, and a cabinet of curiosities frees the thoughts from the limits of preconceptions and ideology.*¹⁵

And as Barbara Stafford writes,

*Wunderkammer collage thus incarnates a dream of connectedness, the encyclopaedic will to comprehend remote or farfetched things by bringing them within the intimate grasp of our very being.*¹⁶



10. Sarah Stone.
Interior of Sir Ashton Lever's Museum
Leicester House, London.
Watercolour and coloured ink. 1787

Juxtaposing the obscene with the beautiful, or putting the strange into play with the familiar, sets up narratives for the viewer in which possible connections are analysed. Strange and exotic objects have the potential to guide the mind of the viewer to imagine and to connect with faraway places, thus creating a desire to obtain knowledge of them.

The tradition of the Wunderkammer has continually fascinated artists, allowing investigation into the creation of new relationships and possible meanings that can surface when things are assembled and juxtaposed. Taxonomies and museum displays are inextricably linked with the act of collecting, indexing and archiving resulting in ideas about the order of the world that are far from static, even in our time. Contemporary artists use these disciplines in object based and installation art practices, often echoing the intent of the early cabinets of wonders.

¹⁵ Louise Lippincott and Andreas Bluhm. *Fierce Friends*. Merrell Press: London, 2005, 56.

¹⁶ Barbara Stafford. *Good Looking*. MIT Press: London, 1996, 206.

My project took the Wunderkammer direction when, in 2005, I visited the Kunstkamera¹⁷ in St. Petersburg, Russia. Established by Tsar Peter The Great in 1717, this is considered to be Russia's first natural history museum. A large part of this collection was purchased from Albertus Seba¹⁸. It was Peter The Great's intent that the collection should convey to the masses that the abnormalities in nature were not the work of the devil, but rather the process of God's creation going wrong.



11. Abnormalities in nature. Kunstkamera. St. Petersburg, Russia.
Photograph by writer, 2005. Photographing the main part of this nightmarish collection is not permitted.

This nightmarish collection of natural curiosities places bizarre bottled foetal abnormalities in theatrical juxtaposition alongside such exhibits as platypus, echidna and exquisite coral formations. The collection includes flora and fauna from distant lands, unusual artefacts from primitive cultures, weird weapons and primitive surgical instruments. It appears that the cabinet keepers had been on a quest for collecting just about anything that was strange and exotic, arranging them in curious and bizarre displays enticing the discovery of connections amongst the seemingly incongruous. Looking at these displays my reaction swung from fascination to wonderment and awe, then to horror and disbelief. Why do we seek out the wondrous and the strange? We may experience utter disgust and cover our eyes, but still find ourselves peeping, probably because of insatiable curiosity; or is it the fascination with the macabre?



12. Natural history collection. Kunstkamera. St. Petersburg, Russia.
Photograph by writer, 2005.

¹⁷ The word Kunstkamera is from the German Kunst meaning art and Kammer, meaning a chamber or room. (school.ort.spb.ru/library/vc98/city/map/kunstk.htm)

¹⁸ Jeff Chu. *It's a Jungle In There*. Time Magazine, December 17 2001.
<http://www.umu.se/edmeas/hprov/05a/elf.html>

As mentioned earlier, the Wunderkammer acts as metaphor for the unknown. It embodies a narrative, waiting to be understood. It was this very reflection that led me on the path of exploring the phenomena of the Wunderkammer.

The strange and disparate arrangements in the Kunstkammera pose the question for me as to how, as an artist, I can use the embodied concept as a point of departure both for my individual works and for the manner in which they are collectively displayed. This is the point at which I find a large part of my central research argument lies. Through the juxtaposition of unconnected images in my printmaking works I aim to stimulate the viewer's imagination and provoke awareness of my concerns. Perhaps I can draw upon the way the objects in the Wunderkammer are displayed by juxtaposing my individual works in multi-format arrangements that play off the individual works against each other, and through this create an increased overall feeling of wonder and awe.

Writer Barbara Stafford comments on the Wunderkammer experience.

The metaphor of travelling among beautiful strangers is apt, because the compartmentalized organization makes even the familiar appear unfamiliar. And, in spite of insistent borders, the beholder senses that such extravagantly disparate objects must somehow also be connected. Reminiscent of a vast and perplexing database, the sight of so many conflicting wonders arouses the desire to enter the labyrinth to try to navigate the elegant maze.¹⁹

Stafford also argues that our culture is undergoing similar pivotal transformations to that of the Enlightenment period in our history. Our optical technologies, home computers, the Internet, cable, and other information technologies provide a means of using the image in ways that may transport users to a new period of technological re-enlightenment²⁰. Maybe our computer is the equivalent of a cabinet of curiosities, transporting us around the world and operating like a porthole, allowing us to see the intriguing and the wonderful.

The Wunderkammer made people stop, contemplate and think about the complexity and wonders of nature. Perhaps we have lost this capacity? Can I with my work make people stop, contemplate and gaze in wonder and awe? That is the challenge.

In search of appropriate imagery for use in the development of my work, I directed my research towards the art of natural history illustration.

¹⁹ Barbara Stafford Op.cit., 28.

²⁰ Barbara Stafford. Ibid, 13

The art of natural history illustration

Art has always played an important role in natural history, often serving as the most effective means of communicating newfound information; illustrations have always elucidated written text and educated us about the natural world. Natural history illustrations, whether scientific or picturesque, invite us to discover knowledge and to reflect on the culture of a particular time; to reflect on death as we gaze upon dissected animals or to lead us into the realm of the imagination through allegorical and metaphorical representations of nature.

The fine artist of the Renaissance and the natural history artist developed along separate yet converging paths. It was, however, not until the beginning of the 19th century that these paths finally merged and truly great art resulted from a hybrid movement of science and art²¹. This art achieved a stature that challenges the distinction often drawn between scientific illustration and fine art.

My research mainly focuses on examples of natural history illustration in which the artist has taken it to the level of fine art. Natural history illustration has occupied only a marginal place in the study of art history. Art historian E H Gombrich referred disparagingly to early modern scientific images intended to impart truthful records of their subjects as “illustrated reportage”²², a statement that clearly denied them the status of fine art.

Art historians have conventionally maintained that works of art and scientific images differ from one another constitutionally and irreconcilably stating that: “The former are vehicles for aesthetic expression, whereas the latter convey information, not truth or even style, quasi-anonymously”.²³

As a printmaker I became interested in the history of printmaking methods employed in the production of natural history books. The challenge for me as an artist, in appropriating these illustrations, has been to infuse them with a new energy, thus making them my own.

Historically, most illustrations were executed in watercolour, though they were often later copied and transferred into print. Engraving, etching and lithography were employed to produce multiple reproductions, which could then be circulated to a larger audience. Advancement of printing techniques coincided with the advancement of scientific knowledge. As the understanding of flora and fauna became more accurate, so did the ability to accurately depict them. The connection between natural history collections and the illustrated books are described by Dr Irmgard Musch:

²¹ Madeleine Pinault. *The Painter as Naturalist*. Flammarion Press: Paris, 1991, 57.

²² Claudia Swan. *Art, Science and Witchcraft in Early Holland*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005, 9.

²³ Claudia Swan Ibid, 9.

*Natural history collections and books about the natural world are inextricably linked to each other. While naturalists from the Renaissance onwards increasingly emphasised the primacy of immediate, empirical studies of nature over knowledge from books, this did not, by any means, completely preclude reading. As with Kunstkammer, books formed a part of every natural history collection and served as commentaries on them. They provided access to the subject matter and enabled identification and ordering.*²⁴

When examining the art of natural history illustration, one can see that changes in style occur. The changes, though not as dramatic as in other art forms, still show an evolution in artistic expression.

In 1607, the year that Galileo showed that the path of a projectile is parabolic, the cleric Edward Topsell published a remarkable 1100 page treatise on zoology²⁵. In it he shows a world that had not quite been overturned by the new scientific methodology. Many of



13. Edward Topsell *The Fabled Mantichora*
From *The Historie of Four Footed*
Beastes and Serpents and Insects. 1607.

his zoological drawings are made up of the borrowed parts of other animals; they are not depicting the true reality of these animals. The anatomical knowledge of many species was limited at this time, and was often obtained from descriptive stories of seafarers who had seen the animals on their travels. The images display a naïve and crude quality compared to later

zoological publications, and were often embellished with strange proverbs and Biblical extracts relating to the imaginary animals depicted, creating a strange and ambiguous visual language for the modern viewer²⁶.

It is interesting to observe the stylistic differences in natural history illustrations of this era. In some of these early books the specimens are depicted individually on neutral backgrounds with no overlapping of forms in the drawings; only clear and solitary drawings of specimens and their characteristic traits are evident. The early books have a simplistic design layout; the eye focuses on each specimen and its characteristics. They clearly adhere to a more scientific style of presentation.

In later books the illustrations portray a deeper understanding of nature by displaying the internal organs and skeletal structure of the specimens, placed alongside the full-bodied counterpart. Others show animals and plants placed in their natural surroundings. The emphasis in these later books is on an aesthetically pleasing contextual scene; a somewhat Arcadian paradise. Other books infuse a spiritual

²⁴ Dr Irmgard Musch *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* Taschen Press. Köln, 2005, 9.

²⁵ Edward Topsell. *The Historie of Four Footed Beastes and Serpents and Insects*. Da Capo Press New York, 1967 (Facsimile of original edition: William Laggard. London 1607)

²⁶ John Lienhard. *Topsell's Beasts* <http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi1586.htm>

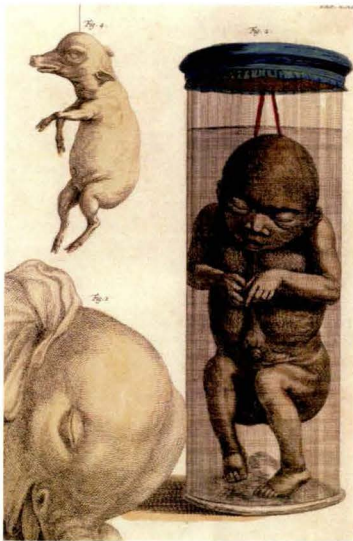
meaning into these scenes, enforcing the view that nature was the creation of God and that all could be explained by way of using the stories from the Bible to enforce that notion.

My research also examined the work of Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), a German naturalist artist who defied all patriarchal expectations of her role in society²⁷. Through



14. Maria Sibylla Merian.
Metamorphosis of a Frog. c 1700
Guache & watercolour on velum.

careful observation, she chose to portray the metamorphosis of life forms from birth through to maturity, often placing the specimen in its natural habitat, or domestic environment, creating a new gender based convention. She often mixed botanical and zoological genres, without regard for scientific methodology. Her work displays a more decorative style rather than a scientific one, probably because they were intended to attract private collectors who preferred more aesthetically pleasing drawings to add to their collections.



15. Albertus Seba.
Foetus of Asiatic elephant, human and pig.

A considerable amount of my visual resource material comes from Albertus Seba²⁸ (1665-1736). He employed no less than thirteen artists to transfer coloured images onto copper plates; an enormously costly and time consuming task. An apothecary by profession, he also called himself a collector of curiosities. One story tells that Seba would await incoming ships on the Amsterdam docks. After treating sick sailors, he preferred not money for his treatments, but would instead accept weird specimens, like a deformed animal foetus, that the sailors would have collected during their travels to faraway places²⁹.

It is known that Seba was closely involved in the layout and design of the plates. Considered strange by naturalists in later times was the way Seba placed predators in the same frame as their prey. He would also, for example, add a single skeleton of a chameleon to a page of full-bodied chameleons.

²⁷ Andrea Pollan. *Hidden Worlds, Other Views*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1991.

²⁸ Albertus Seba. *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities*. The complete plates in colour. 1734-1765.

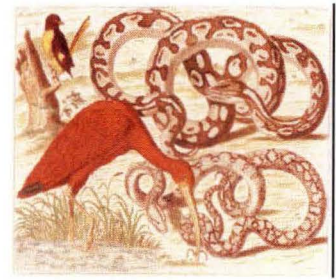
²⁹ Chu, Jeff. Op cit.



16. Albertus Seba.
Fantasy Animal: Hydra



17. Albertus Seba. *Siamese Goat Twins and Twin Monstrous Cats*.

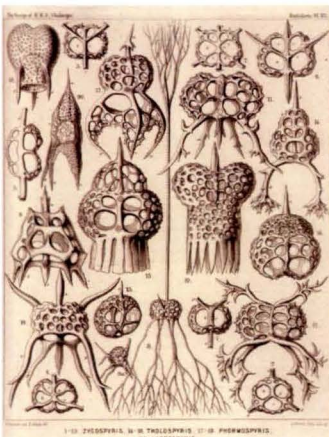


18. Albertus Seba.
Zoological illustration. 1734.

Seba's work stands out in natural history publication. His contradictory juxtaposition of images follows the Wunderkammer tradition; the images play off against each other. His fetish for the weird and the fantastic is shown through his inclusion of a few weird specimens, like the dangling *Foetus of Asiatic elephant, human and pig* (15). The drawings, though decorative, evoke a sense of the unexpected and the surreal; unique qualities in comparison to modern illustration. I am drawn to his work because they embody curious and contradictory juxtapositions. The play off of images against each other invites the viewer to make connections. This is an idea I pursue in my own work.

In the Art Nouveau period it was Ernst Haeckel³⁰ who took natural history illustration to a new and exciting level. He was a contentious biologist, important and renowned for his emphatic advocacy of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. He was also a great illustrator of natural phenomena³¹. His unique drawings of the microscopic realm of nature are recognised as influencing the new design vocabulary of artists, architects and designers of that time. He wrote of the beauty and diversity of nature:

*Nature has created an exhaustible wealth of wondrous forms whose beauty and diversity way exceed anything that has been created by man*³².



19. Ernst Haeckel.
Radiolarians. Lithograph

Haeckel discovered the radiolarian, a single celled organism occurring in amazing variety at the bottom of the sea. The diversity of these life forms held endless fascination for him; he drew 4,000 of them in his lifetime. His drawings and lithographs overwhelm all sorts of categorical distinctions between art, nature, and science. His most famous book³³ illustrates a vast array of micro-organisms that appear hallucinatory and surreal due to the way he depicted them. The book became an inspirational visual resource for artists in the Art Nouveau period.

²⁹ Chu, Jeff. Op cit.

³⁰ Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), a biologist, was the first full professor of zoology in Jena, Germany.

³¹ Ernst Haeckel. *Art Forms in Nature*. Prestel Verlag: Munich, 1988.

³² Ernst Haeckel. *Art Forms From The Ocean*. Prestel Verlag: Munich, 1899.

³³ Ernst Haeckel. *Art Forms in Nature*. op.cit.



20. Ernst Haeckel. *Dictyophora Basimycetes*. Lithograph.

His amazing drawings were achieved with the help of a specially designed powerful microscope. This device allowed him to see the 'unseen' world of nature. Whilst recognised as a natural scientist he was, at the same time, and in a more profound sense, also an artist.

Olaf Breidbach considers that for Haeckel the illustration is not a depiction of existing knowledge, but is itself the acquisition of knowledge of nature. The truths of nature are seen. Briedbach goes on to state that in revealing the form of nature, knowledge of nature may be ascertained³⁴.

Many of Haeckel's creatures are from underwater; amorphous animals such as jellyfish, radiolarians and corals, whose structures are almost devoid of solid, straight lines. He described these "in-between creatures" as "wonderfully ornamented"³⁵. The drawings give no visual sense of the creature's habitat. Haeckel's creatures are singled out for scrutiny, and ready for scientific examination. He was, apparently, enamoured with jellyfish in particular and they were used as decorative elements throughout his home; on the ceiling, on pieces of furniture and even on china³⁶.

Haeckel's illustrations are very ornamental. Instead of depicting the specimens in a strictly scientific way, he represented them as decorative and somewhat flamboyant. That is why I am intrigued with Haeckel's drawings. He exaggerated the truth for artistic reasons. The illustrations are clearly the works of an artist; he has expressed his feelings, his vision of the beautiful, the sublime and the horrific. In illustrating these forms in a purely decorative way, Haeckel may have been following the fashion of the day. This was the period when Art Nouveau was at its peak; Briedbach argues that Haeckel's work was influenced by the decorative culture of that time. In other words, Art Nouveau's approach determined Haeckel's.

*Art Forms in Nature presents 'art-i-facts'. The illustrations of nature presented here reflect the perceptual culture of Haeckel's day, i.e., the way of seeing of an entire era. The distant world, the foreign, becomes part of the décor in this culture; it seems "controllable". Interestingly enough, it is precisely at this point that the developments in physics and this type of biology converge. Both seem ... from completely different perspectives ... to control nature.*³⁷

³³ Ernst Haeckel. *Art Forms in Nature*. op.cit.

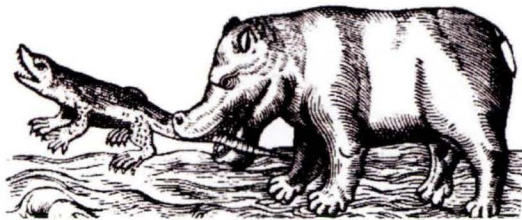
³⁴ Olaf Briedbach. *Brief Instructions to Viewing Haeckel's Pictures*. Prestel Publications: Munich, 1998, 13.

³⁵ Gabriele Fahr-Becker. *Art Nouveau*. Konemann: Köln, 1997.

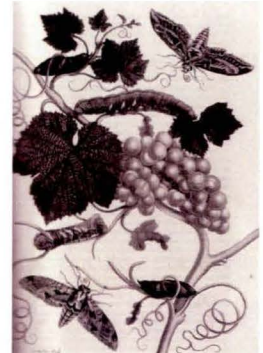
³⁶ M Huey. *Medusa Man World of Interiors*. May Edition 1999, 54-63.

³⁷ Olaf Breidbach. *Brief Instructions to Viewing Haeckel's Pictures*. Prestel: Germany, 1998, 18.

Haeckel's drawings have been tremendously influential on many of the 20th century artistic movements, including popular culture. Among the Surrealists, Max Ernst was especially influenced by Haeckel's work. Other early 20th century artists such as Paul Klee and Kandinsky also drew reference from his art. The contemporary artists Philip Taaffe and Fred Tomaselli also acknowledge Haeckel's legacy.



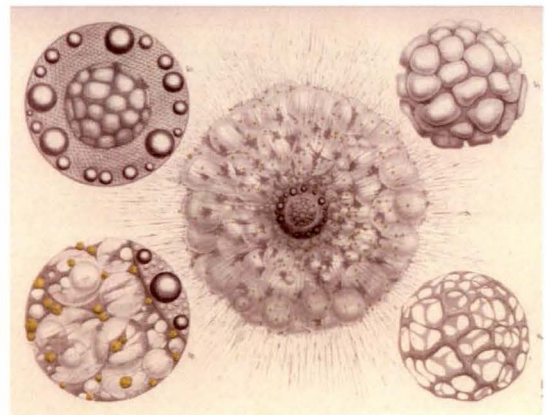
21. Edward Topsell. *Carnivorous hippopotamus*. 1607.



22. Maria Sibylla Merian. *Metamorphosis insectorum surinamensium*. 1705.



23. Albertus Seba. *Corallium rubrum*. Circa 1750.



24. Ernst Haeckel. *Thalassicolla pelagica*. 1862

The art of natural history illustration is a rich and diverse visual resource that shows us the eye of the artist, in concert with scientific endeavour, working to reveal poetic observations of the beauty, intrigue and complexity of nature.

The range of works by the natural history illustrators that I have singled out are a resource that I have accessed in my 'transition to latest work' which will be discussed later in this paper. These illustrators' works embody various visual qualities and ideas; the appropriateness of taking any particular illustration for manipulation and embodiment in my own work is discussed in chapter three.

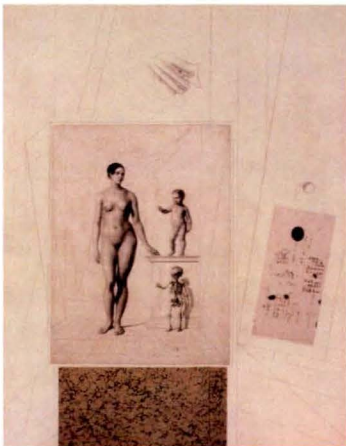
The challenge for me in using these images is whether I can transform the old into a new expression and, indeed, can these images work to assist in conveying the narrative I am striving for in my work?

Echoing the curious and the marvellous

The visual array contained in the Wunderkammer fascinated and inspired the Surrealists. If it is seen that the cabinet collections were trying to emphasise relationships between the individual items in the cabinets, the Surrealists, by way of contrast, were equally good at assembling items whose conjunctions would be without meaning. This can be seen in their sculptural assemblages, which tried to mimic some of the aspects of those eclectic collections. Art historian Werner Haftmann discusses the Surrealist method of bringing out the absurdity in the world of things

*As their materials these artists make use of actual things, creating a chaotic, hallucinated, absurd dream world that is rendered with a meticulous illusionistic realism; fantastic perspectives in which incompatibles are brought together, isolated anatomical fragments composed into grotesque creatures, sinister looking mechanisms and technological structures, marvellous, monstrous creatures, metamorphoses of organic abstractions.*³⁸

This methodology of bringing together disparate forms can be seen in the works of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Max Ernst (1891-1976), and Andre Breton (1896-1966).



25. Max Ernst. *Facility*.
Also *Loplop Introduces*. 1931.
Collage, 64.5 x 50 cm.

In Max Ernst's collages we can see his use of dissimilar visual elements that are brought together into compositions that appear to have no apparent logic to them. I identify with his pictorial strategy, which utilises the borrowed imagery from old engravings; he transforms these into pictures that appear strange and otherworldly. His apparent aim was to create a unified image from these collage fragments, assembling them so that they appeared as a single entity. Ernst was so skilled at manipulating his material that it was often impossible to tell whether or not it was an actual collage.

Baudelaire, talking with Delacroix, is quoted as considering that

*Nature is nothing but a dictionary ... those who have no imagination copy the dictionary. This results in a very great vice, the vice of banality*³⁹.

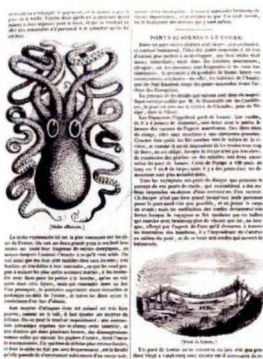
These words aptly describe Ernst's point of departure in that he did not fall into the trap of banality, but used the copied and tamed reality of nature to form his Surrealist collages and to give them an intriguing vitality of their own,

*The copied and tamed reality he [Ernst] found in catalogues and didactic publications of the nineteenth century served him as his dictionary*⁴⁰.

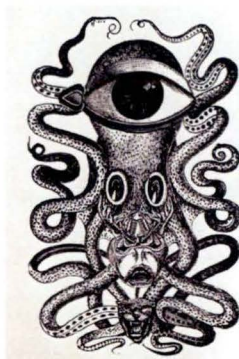
³⁸ Werner Haftmann. *Painting in the Twentieth Century Volume 1*. Lund Humphries: London, 1965, 191.

³⁹ Werner Spies. *Max Ernst. LopLop*. Thames and Hudson: Great Britain 1982, 41.

⁴⁰ Werner Spies. *Ibid*, 41.



26. Visual source material employed by Max Ernst.

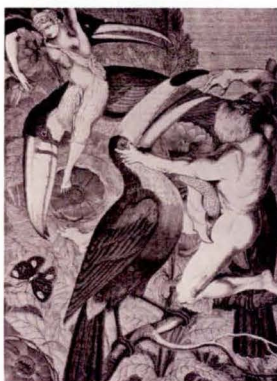


27. Max Ernst. *La Dame Ovale*. 1939. Collage.

Ernst achieved his effects by cutting and pasting as little as possible. He improved his technique by reproducing images photographically so that the cut edges were no longer visible. He borrowed from scientific journals, natural history books and periodicals.



28. Visual source material employed by Max Ernst.

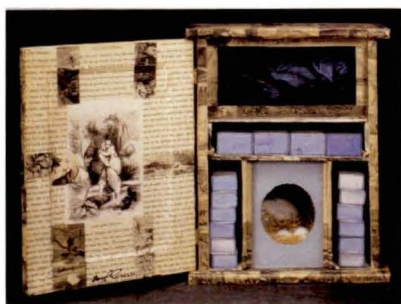


29. Max Ernst. *The Hundred Headless Woman*. 1929. Collage.

His use of borrowed natural illustration is exemplified in the work *The Hundred Headless Woman* (29), which depicts human forms intertwined with birds; it is an image loaded with erotic fantasies.

These strange displaced beings appear to exist in some sort of disturbed dream world. This type of imagery sets up confusing and mysterious notions for the viewer.

The Wunderkammer tradition resonates in the work of American Surrealist Joseph Cornell (1903-72) who was a rapacious collector of objects that became the components for his box constructions. Initially influenced by Max Ernst's collages, he soon began making his own collages and small assemblages. Whilst the Surrealist artists made use of the box format, a lot of Cornell's work has more of a cabinet look; they sit vertically with their contents in full view.



30. Joseph Cornell. *Untitled*. 1946. Construction, 317 x 254 x 110 cm.

Cornell's *Shadow Boxes* (30)⁴¹ are small scale constructions in which are pasted reproductions from old maps, historical artworks, natural history illustrations and newspapers. These are juxtaposed against an eclectic array of found objects and assembled into a collage with depth, framed with wood and usually sealed in glass.

Cornell's work contains references to the past in the form of toys and old scrap-book images, conjuring up an enigmatic, slightly sinister vision of childhood. He was

⁴¹Dianne Waldman. *Joseph Cornell, Master of Dreams*. Harry N Abrams Inc: New York, 2002, 13.

fascinated by fragments of once beautiful and precious objects, relying on the Surrealist technique of irrational juxtaposition and on the evocation of nostalgia. Cornell's boxes and the cabinets of curiosities share a poetic fantasy and mystique.



31. Joseph Cornell. *Untitled*. 1942.
Construction, 333 x 254 x 89 cm.

His interest in natural history is revealed in his *Aviary Series* (31), focused on birds in a habitat or arcade, or simply the birdcage itself. The box recalls the man-made environments in museums, designed to recreate slices of nature and used for educational purposes. Cornell's interest in natural history imagery is evident in his use of copies from 19th century ornithological engravings, and the watercolours by the artist John James Audubon. These copies he juxtaposes against stuffed birds purchased from taxidermy shops, along with other found materials and objects.

Cornell had a tremendous influence on other artists during his lifetime. Artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Lucas Samaras elaborated on Cornell's ideas of assemblage and use of reproduced imagery within their own works.



32. Milan Milojevic. *Bird Tree*. 2004
Digital, woodcut diptych. 40 x 60 cm

In contemporary printmaking, using similar concepts, the artist Milan Milojevic uses the images of maps, old woodcuts, and strange and exotic illustrations from 16th century zoological and botanical publications. Through layers of digital manipulation of these images he creates his own imaginary world where strange hybrid creatures live amongst fantastical botanical surroundings that are devoid of any human presence.

I share with the Surrealists the strategy of accessing historical imagery as a 'dictionary' for appropriation. However, in contrast, I do not resort to the literal borrowing of the image, in a cut-and-paste tradition. I seek to adopt and manipulate the image, in a largely hands-on process, to give it a new meaning prior to layering into my work.

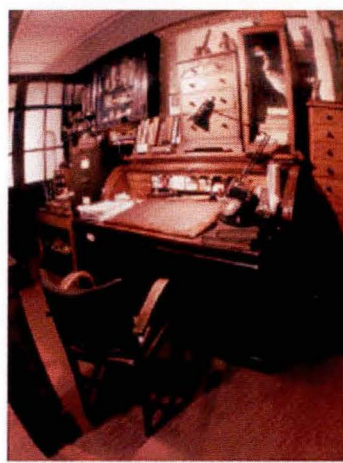
Many of the specific images that I have accessed for my own work are quite disparate and, when brought together in a deliberate fashion, they will hopefully create an unsettling sensation. It is this unsettling sensation that I also want to infuse into my printmaking.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT: RELATED ART PRACTICES

The contemporary artists discussed in this chapter variously draw artistic inspiration from three distinct areas; the natural world, the Wunderkammer and the art of natural history illustration. All three of these areas have informed and inspired my work to some degree.



33. Osmo Rauhala. *Lost Paradise*. 1990, oil and wax, 26 x 26 cm.



34. Mark Dion. *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy*. 2005. Installation.



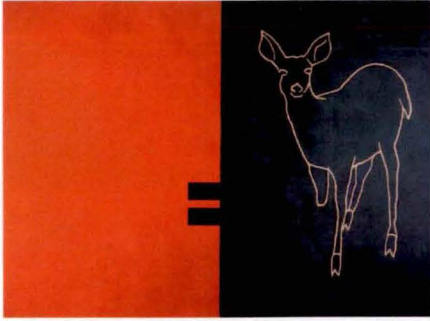
35. Walton Ford. *Dirty Dick Burton's Aide de Camp*. 2002. Watercolour.

The Finnish artist Osmo Rauhala draws his inspiration directly from nature and expresses ecological concerns in his work and writing, both of which are informed by mythological, philosophical, physical and ecological concerns. I strongly identify with his use of art to make us aware of the need to preserve our natural environments.

There has been a revival of interest in the idea of the Wunderkammer over recent years. The contemporary artists Mark Dion, Rosamund Purcell and Kiki Smith each in their own way investigate cabinets of curiosities in their work. These artists explore ideas drawn from the Wunderkammer as collections that can be perceived as a setting for fantasy, or even a dream place, where each and every object is ripe for symbolic decoding.

The art of natural history illustration is a rich visual resource that contemporary artists Walton Ford and Philip Taaffe draw on for their imagery. Natural history illustration is sometimes described as having a scientific override; a certain stiffness that tends to make caricatures of nature, especially if we compare these illustrations with those of the more sensual and vivid style of the artist naturalist. The artists discussed draw upon natural history illustrations ranging from earlier, more naïve style drawings and prints, to the richly coloured and detailed paintings of 19th century botanical and zoological art.

This research is framed by the following question. How successful have these contemporary visual artists been in conveying a narrative?



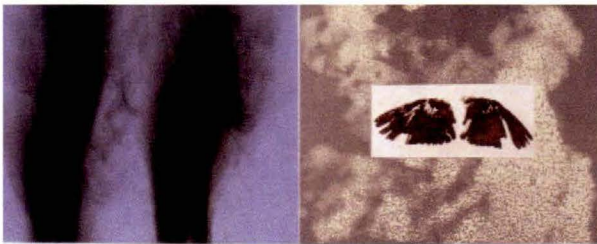
36. Osmo Rauhala. *Interval*. 1994.
Oil and wax, 210 x 210 cm.

Rauhala's work deals mainly with the relationship between man and nature, a theme that is closely bound up with his occupation as an organic farmer. His village is in an isolated area where the sun is hardly seen for six months of the year and where bright colour seems to stand out in a usually white and grey landscape. As a child Rauhala was brought up on Norse tales; stories that are set in strange and secret.

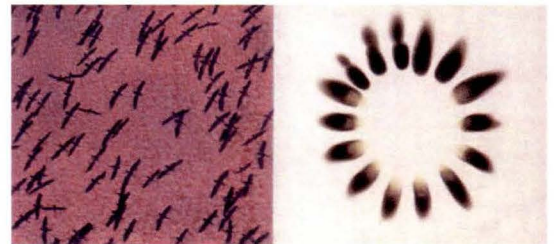
landscapes that are rich in animal symbolism These myths trigger strong visual images for young and old alike, so it is not surprising that Rauhala's interest in Finnish mythology is a major subject area running through his work.

As an artist I am curious about myself and the world around me, I am intrigued by the intermediated states in which different phenomena come face to face: night and day, water and air, the boundaries of the micro cosmos and the macro cosmos, linear processes and chaotic ones. ⁴²

Rauhala acknowledges that myths, rituals, tales and pictures have important information hidden within them regarding man and his relationship with the world around him. His paintings and prints can be seen to work as information panels, with a subtle narrative running through them, alluding to Rauhala's philosophical thoughts on the changing natural environment.



37. Osmo Rauhala. *Things Lost in Air*. 1995,
Monotypic, 20 x 60 cm.



38. Osmo Rauhala. *Things Lost in Fire III*. 1995,
Monotypic, 30 x 70 cm.

In *Things Lost in Air* (37) and *Things Lost in Fire III* (38) the panels are grouped into intriguing arrangements in which each photographic image is surrounded by small panels. They appear as display panels that optically persuade you to look for connections that unravel the story inherent in the work. Rauhala's use of black panels and backgrounds can be connected to the Nordic idea of chaos which is perceived as a darkness or formlessness, defined as a state where nothing exists except a gaping void or abyss, where nothing lives except forms of primordial sea serpents that hold the seeds of life within them.

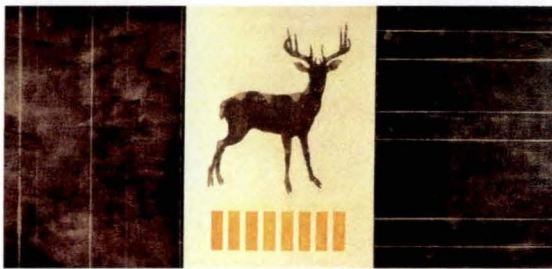
⁴¹ Osmo Rauhala (born 1957) is a Finnish painter, printmaker and video artist. He lives in Siuro, Finland

⁴² Osmo Rauhala. *Nature Science and Art*. Otava Publishing Company Ltd: Helsinki, 2003, 23.

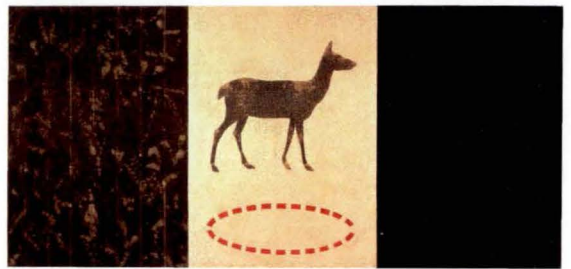
A large amount of Rauhala's work reflects on the role of animals in the world of humans, linking ancient stories and myths that are associated with them into the narrative of the works. David Garneau writes:

*Animal images are integral to the symbolism of cultures that identify themselves within nature. Cultures that symbiotically engage the environment represent animals not only as sources of food and shelter, but also as sources of meaning and identity; animal beings and human beings are expressed as intertwined realities.*⁴³

Rauhala's favourite animal is the deer, an animal of exceptional beauty that neither threatens nor frightens man. Rauhala identifies in his work the ancient Celtic belief that the deer is a mystical symbol of the harmony of spirit and matter; it is a bearer of good tidings and a communicator of knowledge⁴⁴. Rauhala uses these symbolic meanings connected to this animal poetically as part of the narrative employed in his works.



39. Osmo Rauhala, *Space with Shifting Boundaries I* 1996 Oil and wax, 240 x 498 cm



40. Osmo Rauhala, *Space with Shifting Boundaries II*, 1996 Oil and wax, 240 x 498 cm

Works such as *Space with Shifting Boundaries I and II* (39, 40) depict the deer as a dark silhouette cut into a light space; the left panel alludes to the strata in the earth and the right panel to the cosmos. The middle panel shows the deer as the traveller or messenger between these two worlds. It is evident in Rauhala's art and thinking that he is motivated by a genuine analytical curiosity regarding the natural world. His interest in the workings of science is often revealed in his work through the use of microscopic and macroscopic imagery.



41. Osmo Rauhala. *The Birth of a River-The Ganges*. 1993, Oil 166 x 488 cm.

⁴³ Garneau David. *Eye of Nature, Wide Awake: In Dreamland Essay*. Walter Philips Gallery: Canada, 1991, 44.

⁴⁴ Osmo Rauhala. Op. cit, 70.

The Birth of a River-The Ganges (41), consisting of two contrasting panels across which elegant vein-like patterns meander, gives the sensation of looking down on the earth as well as looking up into the sky, reminding us of the life-giving energy that water provides. Rauhala describes the inspiration behind his use of these patterns in the work:

It was partly by accident that I found the connection between a deer's antlers and the pattern of lightning in New York in 1991, but it was not long afterwards that I noticed that the same fractal motif was repeated in the branches of a tree, the roots of a plant, the blood vessels in our body and the patterns of rivers⁴⁵.

Rauhala also works in installation through experimenting with film and video by projecting images onto glass and mirrors to create illusionary effects. He deliberately uses these materials to optically manipulate the space in which these works are exhibited.



42. Osmo Rauhala. *System Complexity*. 2006, Video installation. Eeva Pinomaa Gallery, Finland

In his latest video installation, *System Complexity* (42), projected images of wolves focus in and out, cinematically creating a sense of moving through time and space for the viewer. The use of scrim material hanging from the ceiling in front of the projected images works as a diffuser, like looking through a gossamer veil into a dreamlike world of illusions. This work is based on an encounter Rauhala had with a wolf in the forest. From the encounter, his initial fear turned into respect for the animal.

Critic John Yau succinctly encapsulates the power of Rauhala's work in the words:

The artist would seem to have two options in this confusing, obviously chaotic visual world: he can either accept that the world is meaningless or rearrange the visual signs so that the viewer perceives them as relevant or- which in my opinion is a more difficult path -he can try to extract some meaning from the world and its visual languages without being nostalgic about it. Osmo Rauhala is an artist who has chosen the latter path.⁴⁶

I have intense admiration for Rauhala's work. Additionally, aesthetic considerations aside, I strongly identify with and admire his philosophical and conceptual approach. In a simple, subtle and yet succinct way his work embodies and conveys the message of his concerns. This is what I seek to achieve in meeting my project aims, albeit in a different medium and manner.

⁴⁵ Osmo Rauhala. Ibid, 113.

⁴⁶ Osmo Rauhala. Ibid, 113.

MARK DION ⁴⁷

Mark Dion is a contemporary artist who draws on the Wunderkammer tradition for inspiration. We can perhaps think of Dion as an actor as he often, when creating his work, takes on the role of an explorer, biochemist, detective and archaeologist.



43. Mark Dion. *Cabinet of Curiosities*. 1997. Installation view, Photo: Richard K. Loesch.



44. Mark Dion. *Tar and Feathers*. 1996. Tree, wooden base, tar, feathers, various taxidermic animals.

In his gallery installations since the 1980's, Dion has constructed mock museums and scientific laboratories, incorporating an extensive range of objects such as discarded taxidermic animals, laboratory equipment, and found objects. Many of his installations operate somewhat like walk-through Wunderkammer, or life-sized cabinets of curiosity. His installations critique the cataloguing and presentation of artistic and historical materials in western museums, exploring themes as diverse as archaeology, consumer culture, ecology, environmentalism, and political activism.

Dion finds museums of natural history intriguing sites for his investigation into cultural constructs. Dion describes his work in the statement

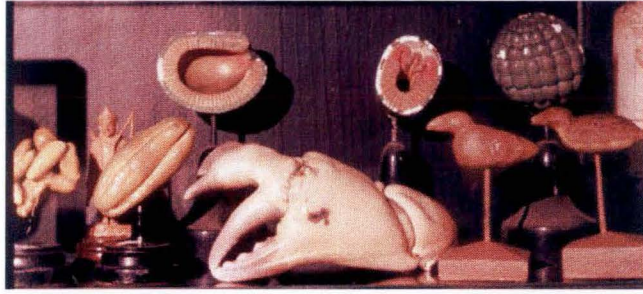
*My work is mostly about exploring questions around the representation of nature, which means, that rather than being about nature, it is concerned with ideas about nature. By this I mean that my work tries to investigate what nature means for a particular group of people, in a particular place at a distinct point in history.*⁴⁸

In the installation, *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy* (45), we see affinities and resonances that connect to Surrealism and the cabinets of curiosities. The installation conceptually connects us to the Bureau of Surrealist Research, an office run by the Surrealists in Paris during 1924-25.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Mark Dion (born 1961) is an American installation artist.

⁴⁸ Mark Dion, <http://www.cmoa.org/international/html/forum/dionresponse.htm>

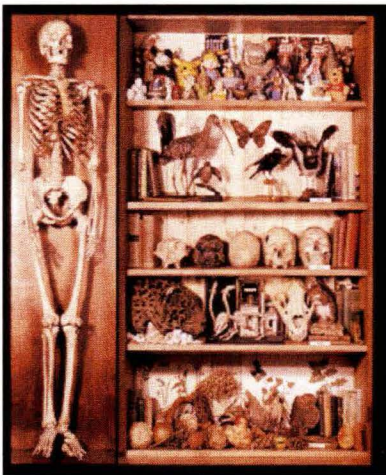
⁴⁹ Matthew Gale. *Dada & Surrealism*. Phaidon Press: London, 1997, 226.



45. Mark Dion. *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy*. 2005. Installation. Manchester Museum

The installation, an assemblage of objects and specimens unearthed from the museum's storage rooms and nearby flea markets arranged around a desk, suggests both a fictional office and a 16th and 17th century cabinet. Dion's collection of objects and specimens includes a magic lantern, a stuffed platypus, a mandrake root, plastic teaching models and a six-legged guinea pig. The installation is Surrealist in spirit and evokes, in the manner of a cabinet of curiosity, the passion for collecting objects, both natural and man-made, of classifying, and of juxtaposing objects and knowledge; it is like a museum in miniature that sits within the larger one. It works the same as a Wunderkammer; the viewer experiences a sense of wonder and puzzlement at the choice of exotic and strange objects, and takes us back to another mode of curatorial practice. As the writer David Lomas states,

*Dion's Bureau has given temporary sanctuary to assorted freaks and monsters, to the merely strange or unclassifiable, which have all re-emerged from their hiding places. Surprise and delight and even terror have reclaimed their rights.*⁵⁰



46. Mark Dion & Robert Williams. *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium*. 2001. Installation.

In *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium* (46) Dion makes explicit reference to the imaginary world of the cabinets of curiosities. Dion has arranged the objects on shelves within a unit that follows the line of thinking of Spanish mystic Ramond Lull⁵¹. Lull saw the cosmos organised hierarchically with God at the top, followed by Angels, Air, Humanity, Animals, Plants, Fire and Stones. In this bookcase style installation Dion adopts Lull's theory in his arrangement of found objects. Dion leaves God unimagined. Angels are represented by toys and videos, Air by birds and butterflies, Humanity by skulls and books, and Animals and Plants by dried specimens⁵².

In the installation, *Taxonomy of Non-endangered Species*, (47) Dion uses popular culture in the form of stuffed toy animals; they work metaphorically to convey Dion's ideas.

⁵⁰ David Lomas. *Mark Dion's Surrealist Legacy*. Dionarticle.indd 2005

⁵¹ Ramond Lull. 1232-1315, Catalan author, mystic and missionary.



47. Mark Dion. *Taxonomy of Non-endangered Species*. 1990, Mixed media installation.

This work reveals Dion's fascination with taxonomy and other systems that science has used to seek an ordered view of the natural world. In the installation we see Mickey Mouse perched on top of a ladder. Mickey is, in fact, Baron Cuvier the man chiefly responsible for the taxonomic method. Mickey, alias the Baron, looks like he has just sorted out the specimen jars containing pickled popular soft toys on the shelf beside him. Dion's work points out to us that the non-endangered animals, as revered in cartoons and soft animal toys, are destined to endure whereas the fate of real endangered animals are increasingly under threat.

Dion describes the distorted view of nature that is now presenting itself:

*While flesh and blood experience with the animal world is diminishing, we are inundated with surrogates broadcast over every imaginable media, configured in every shape, and made out of every imaginable material from blue plastic to polyester fur to gold. What child of the West does not grow up with a crib and toy chest lined with anthropomorphic beasts?*⁵³



48. Mark Dion. *Arctic Hall*. 1991-2002, Mixed media installation.

This message resounds in Dion's installation, *Arctic Hall* (48), which shows a fake stuffed polar bear, with cassette player in mouth, sitting awkwardly in a tin washtub filled with cured tar; this all sits on top of a packing case with the word *fragile* printed on its side. This is accompanied by numerous photographs of polar bears as featured in dioramas in natural history museums around the world. By employing irony, humour and a sense of improvisation, Dion's installation confronts and emphasises the fact that the survival of the polar bear is now under threat.

I admire the theatrical element in Dion's work. In displaying his installations in the museum setting, juxtaposed against the other museum display. Dion poses questions about the nature of the museum at large. His ideas and careful selection of objects convey his message, without his resorting to the obvious and literal. His subtle message is conveyed in clear and succinct terms. It is this strategy in his work that intrigues me. I consider him to be one of the few artists who successfully makes use of a museum style of display to convey a message.

⁵² Patrick Mauries. *Cabinets of Curiosities*. Thames & Hudson Ltd: London, 2002, 235.

⁵³ Mark Dion. *Science and the Eclipse of the Earth*. Circa Art Magazine: Ireland, 2001, 28-31

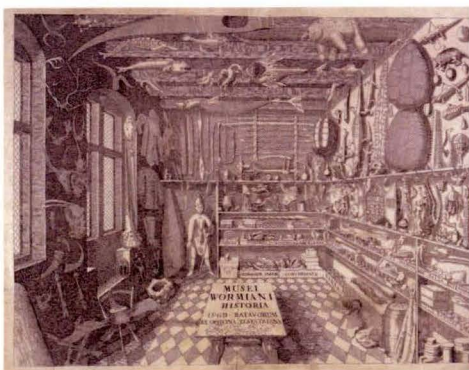


49. Rosamund Purcell.
Conjoined Twins. 2003, Photograph

A great deal of Rosamund Purcell's artistic focus is in documenting and photographing the collections of natural history museums around the world. Purcell has frequently worked with palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould⁵⁵ who often supplies the explanatory text to her photographs of zoological specimens. Viewing her photographs for the first time, one could mistake them for paintings; they are rich in colour and textural detail. Her exquisitely composed pictures show an integration of the aesthetically beautiful with scientific information. Purcell's images can appear as part myth and part science, capturing the museum style presentation of artefacts; they also direct the viewer into focusing on the complexities of classification. Images like

those of two-headed animals, babies in jars or transparent cross-sections of a human face possess the ability to startle the contemporary viewer and create a sense of awe. Even though the objects themselves may be centuries old, they still possess a magic aura. It is this essence that Purcell captures in her photographs.

An engraving of the Wunderkammer assembled in 1665 by Olaus Worm⁵⁶ inspired Purcell to create the installation, *Two Rooms*, a work that she regards as her gesamtkunstwerk^{57 58}. One part of the installation, *Worm's Room* (51), is the recreation of the 17th Century cabinet of Olaus Worm, the other, *Rosamund's Room* (52), is a relocation of part of her own studio.



50. Olaus Worm.
Musei Wormiani Historia. 1665.
Original copper engraving



51. Rosamund Purcell.
Worm's Room. 2002.
Installation.



52. Rosamund Purcell.
Rosamund's Room. 2002.
Installation (part image)

⁵⁴ Rosamund Purcell is a contemporary American artist who works in photography and sculptural installation.

⁵⁵ Stephen Jay Gould is Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology and Geology at Harvard University.

⁵⁶ Olaus Worm 1588-1654 Danish physician, chemist and antiquary, and the founder of a large collection, the *Museum Wormianum*, that was later purchased by King Frederick III of Denmark.

⁵⁷ The word 'gesamtkunstwerk' is the German word for 'synthesis of the arts'.

⁵⁸ Rosamund Purcell. <http://www.smmoa.org>

Worm's Room (51) displays, in exactly the same way as the original, the strange and wonderful items collected from the natural world. Purcell studied the detailed engraving of Worm's cabinet, and either found or fabricated the artefacts to make up the exact size replica⁵⁹. The viewer is transported back to an era when Wunderkammer were used to inform people about nature and science; it invites the viewer to experience and question the arrangements within it, evoking alternative meanings from the strange juxtapositions of the objects displayed. One might question as to what was to be gained by recreating Worm's room so precisely, but obviously Purcell's fascination had become an obsession, which perhaps was fulfilled by making the replica.

Rosamund's Room (52) features Purcell's collection of objects found throughout twenty years of her visiting local junkyards and rubbish tips. However, after years of exposure to the elements and erosion from salt attack, her assembled items are no longer what they once were. Their less than pristine nature offers the viewer possibilities for the imagination to take over. The ageing process has transformed the objects, giving them a new and mysterious significance. There is an inherent beauty in these discarded items; faded colours, rich reds of rust encrusted metal, bleached washed out look of wood and paint.

Overall, it is the divergence of items between the two rooms that leaves the viewer with a sense of amazement; they speak of the history of collecting, of museums and of the dialogue between natural decay versus obsolescence. The juxtaposition of the two rooms initiates a dialogue between the order of science and the objective choices of the artist.

Purcell's 1999 photographic collection⁶⁰(53) depicts images of stuffed museum specimens



53. Rosamund Purcell.
The Last Passenger Pigeon. 1999,
Cibachrome print, 16 x 20"

tagged with their classification details, skeletal reconstructions or sometimes just the fragments of bones. The pictures poetically mourn the loss of species like the passenger pigeon. Viewing these beautiful photographs of dead animals we think of some of the reasons why they are now extinct - loss of habitat, introduced predators, diseases and hunting.

Purcell's photographs display an intense aesthetic attention to detail. The colours, forms and textures in her work evoke in me a positive sensory response. I regard the achieving of a similar response from my audience to be an important aim in my work.

⁵⁹ Rosamund Purcell. <http://ftapies.com/wp/wordpress> 2003.

⁶⁰ Rosamond Purcell. *Swift As A Shadow: Extinct and Endangered Animals*. Mariner Books: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.



54. Kiki Smith. *Peabody (Animal Drawings)*. 1996, Installation detail, floor piece of multiple layers of etchings on handmade Nepalese paper, composition and sheet. Various dimensions.

Kiki Smith is captivated by the idea of the Wunderkammer. She sees them as repositories of large amounts of visual resources that are ripe for reinterpretation. This is evident in Smith's work in the way she focuses on the tradition of gathering together an array of wondrous objects and images and then displaying them in unusual groupings. Smith draws visual ideas from an array of historical sources: Mogul tapestries, ancient Egyptian burial rites, early German Renaissance painting, Assyrian reliefs, Victorian children's books, and myths and fairytales.

She often juxtaposes images together on the one sheet of paper or presents them as larger assemblages. Smith also believes that objects can evoke memories and are able to transport the viewer back in time.

*The thing I love about going to museums is that it's a confirmation. Your ancestors tell you that there's a reason for doing a particular activity, or that they liked doing it too... If you make figurative sculptures, they have a real power in them; they take up some kind of psychic space. I think that objects have memories. I'm always thinking that I'll go to the museum and see something and have a big memory about some other lifetime.*⁶²

Smith often uses objects and images similar to the Wunderkammer in her own work. She often draws in the same way as the early naturalists; the animals and plants are depicted like specimen studies in her works. Visiting museums, Smith was fascinated by the way bird specimens were stored; they lay in compact drawers, somewhat flattened and tagged,

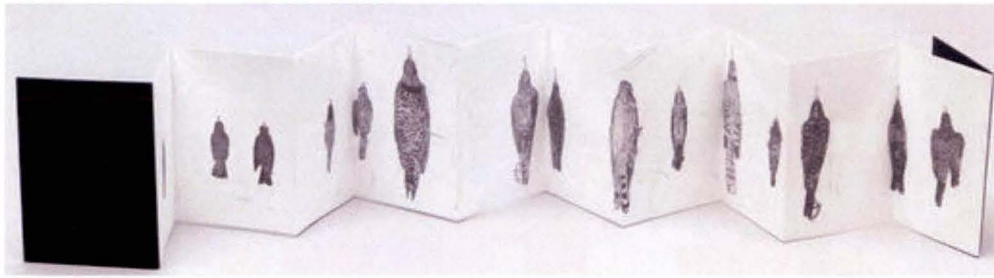
*When the birds are preserved, they tend to get kind of flattened like shrouds or corpses. For storage, they are laid in drawers, thousands of them in drawer after drawer. I think about them in relation to the layouts depicted in etchings of slave ships, a tight containment.*⁶³

On seeing these, Smith completed a series of etchings titled *The Fourth Day: Destruction of Birds* (55). In this series of etchings we see the birds encapsulated in a sparse, ethereal arrangement, reminiscent of specimen drawings from the early natural history books.

⁶¹ Kiki Smith (born 1954, Nuremberg, Germany)) is an American feminist artist who works in sculpture, painting, printmaking, video, and photography.

⁶² Kiki Smith. 1994 <http://www/tfaoi.com/aa/6aa/6aa177.htm>

⁶³ Wendy Weitman. *Kiki Smith Prints, Books & Things*. The Museum of Modern Art: New York, 2003, 31.

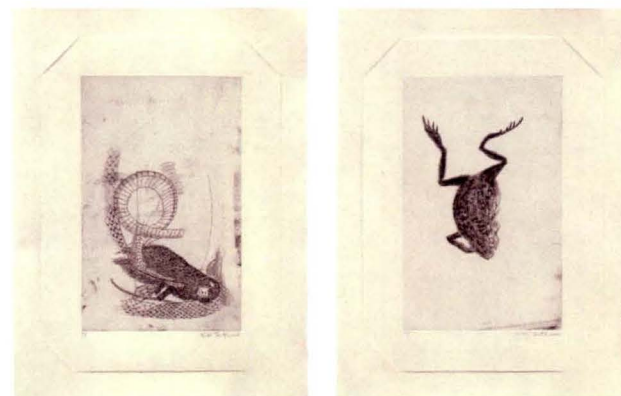


55. Kiki Smith. *The Fourth Day: Destruction of Birds*. 1997. Etchings for Artist's book.

In 1998 Smith created a series of etchings, *White Mammals* (56), based on drawings she made at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Instead of drawing the animals in lifelike poses, as a traditional naturalist would have done, Smith accentuates the specimen's status as corpses. Their vertical format reinforces the notion of creatures hanged and dead.



56. Kiki Smith. *White Mammals*. 1998, etching on mold-made Hahnemuhle paper, each 81.3 x 45.7 cm.



57. Kiki Smith with Susanna Moore. Untitled plates from *Hunters and Gatherers*. 2003 Etching and aquatint, 33 x 21.3 cm.

In *Hunters and Gatherers* (57) Smith has drawn animal specimens that have been removed from the preserving fluid of their jars. They appear unfinished, but strangely lifelike. The frog is represented like an elegant escape artist, as if diving to escape. This change of context totally alters meaning. Smith has, in a way, brought life back into the creatures.

Smith is an unconventional printmaker. She constantly experiments with the medium and how it can be displayed. Her deliberate use of disparate images is a strategy that results in a provocative aesthetic with a powerful visual narrative. Her approach has been a significant influence on my work.

Walton Ford's paintings and prints look like large-scale descendents of the 18th and 19th century tradition of natural history painting and engraving. His life size birds and animals, often extinct or endangered ones, are used as metaphorical stand-ins that address issues to do with extinction, cultural identity, greed, power, natural history, humour, and sexuality.

Ford admires the styles of the 19th century American artists, especially John James Audubon and the Hudson River School painters. He even says, of his own work,

It was very important to me to make them look like Audubon's, to make them look like they were a hundred years old...like he painted them, but that they escaped out of him. ⁶⁵



58. Walton Ford. *Ricordazione-Vinci* 1452. 2005
Watercolour, gouache, ink and pencil on paper.
109 x 158 cm.

Ford's images of nature are meticulously executed in watercolour, ink and gouache, in a style resembling Audubon. They celebrate the myth of the man; repositioning him as an anti-hero who, in reality, killed more animals than he ever could have painted. Ford's work reminds us of the violence involved in producing zoological studies, as it often involved the catching and killing of animals in order to

draw them. As most of natural history illustration is not considered fine art, the challenge for any artist borrowing from this genre is in the transforming of it into their own personal visual language.



59. Walton Ford. *Le Jardin*. 2005,
Watercolour, gouache, pencil and ink on paper,
242 x 461 cm.

In Ford's most successful works we are reminded of the great 19th century animal paintings by artists such as Gabriel Max, Edwin Landseer, and Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps. In this genre of painting, animals were portrayed as showing emotions that could be interpreted as being humanlike by the viewer.

Animals were often depicted in settings and postures that were satirical and could be seen as obvious criticisms of human behaviour. By using the non-human world as a mirror for

⁶⁴ Walton Ford (born 1960, White Plains, NY) is an American artist who works in painting and printmaking. He lives in Southfield, MA and works in Great Barrington, MA

⁶⁵ Walton Ford. www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/tigers_of_wrath/

our own, Ford employs his skill as an artist and observer of people to subtly communicate his subjective commentary on contemporary society. With their vibrant colours, these precisely rendered images become landscapes that incorporate narratives addressing issues in literature, history, the naturalist tradition, the extinction of species and the relationships that can exist between the human race and the animal kingdom.



60. Walton Ford. *Lost Trophy*. 2005, Watercolour, gouache, ink and pencil on paper, 242 x 461 cm.



61. Walton Ford. *Falling Bough*. 2002. Watercolour, ink and pencil on paper, 60 x 119 cm.

In *Falling Bough* (61), a huge branch, broken off due to the weight of the extinct species of Passenger Pigeon birds on it, is seen plummeting to the ground. The birds cling to the falling branch for sheer survival; clustered together, they appear as a dark and foreboding form. A sinister connection is made to acts of nature that have animals committing suicide en-masse. The broken bough could also be linked to the tree of life, the crucifixion or salvation, or perhaps it reminds us of the fragility of nature when abused.



62. Walton Ford. *Dirty Dick Burton's Aide de Camp*. 2002. Watercolour.

Ford obtains ideas for his paintings and prints from published accounts and images in early nature books. He finds this easier than drawing in zoos. This comes through in his work, as the animals mostly appear in frontal poses, reminiscent of the historical illustrations of dead and stuffed animals. As example *Dirty Dick Burton's Aide de Camp*, (62), depicts a primate, the common langoor (*Presbytis entellus*) standing in an abandoned 19th century style camp, somewhere in the Orient, clutching a hookah. The "Dick" Burton referenced is actually Sir Richard Burton⁶⁶, a "gentleman-naturalist" who once invited forty monkeys to his dinner table so he could learn their language and mannerisms.

Ford, in borrowing from natural history illustration and painting, revitalises them with new meaning. He places the animals in situations that result in a narrative that conveys his social and environmental concerns.

⁶⁶ Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890), English explorer and naturalist.

PHILIP TAAFFE⁶⁷

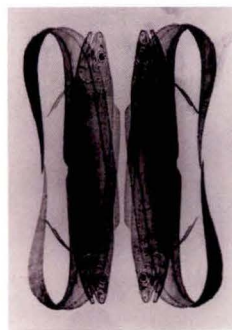
In Philip Taaffe's paintings we experience a sense of the artist's fascination with the forms and colours derived from the natural world. He borrows his images from antiquarian illustrated books of natural history, botanical images, and the worlds of ancient and exotic art. His art gives off a resonating exuberance that comes from his elaborate use of colour, form, space and decorative design, all of which can appear thematically complex to the eye. Taaffe's work reminds us of man's earliest expressions of the magic and wonderment of nature, and the impulse to mediate the powers found there.



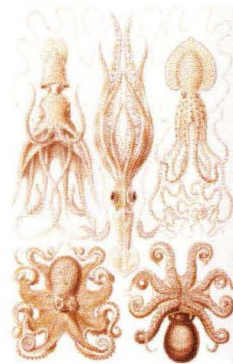
63. Philip Taaffe.
Interzonal Leaves. 1998.
Mixed media, 203 x 231



64. Philip Taaffe.
Double Crab. 2004.
Mixed media on canvas.



65. Philip Taaffe. *Vertical Long Tall Fish*. 1997,
Oil pigment on paper.



66. Ernst Haeckel.
Gamochonia richterkraken
1862, Lithograph.

Taaffe uses silk-screened images affixed to already prepared background, awaiting painting. The layering of pattern combines with a painterly surface to create his unique effects. In some of his work he pushes the images to the stage where features become blurred and abstracted. Achieving this distortion is an important factor in my own work.

In the exhibition *Exploring the Deep from H.M.S Challenger to the Art of Philip Taaffe*⁶⁸, inspired by a scientific voyage in 1872 that collected deep sea creatures in the Atlantic Ocean, Taaffe's lithographs (65) were exhibited alongside Haeckel's (66). Haeckel drew the sea creatures collected from the original voyage. The artist David Brody writes about Philip Taaffe's admiration of Haeckel's work

*As a connoisseur of 18th- and 19th-century scientific illustration, Philip Taaffe also admires Haeckel's contribution as a draughtsman, acknowledging that his drawings brought the field "to a new level of authority or life or animation".*⁶⁹

It is interesting to compare Taaffe's contemporary approach with that of Haeckel's; his is a good example of a contemporary artist's approach to a scientific brief. Whilst using a similar visual resource in my own work, Taaffe's work by comparison is purely aesthetic. They are highly decorative but do not, for me, convey any real message or meaning.

⁶⁷ Philip Taaffe (born 1955, New Jersey) is an American painter living in New York.

⁶⁸ David Brody. *Ernst Haeckel and the Microbial Baroque*. Cabinet Magazine, Issue 7, Summer 2002.

⁶⁹ scienceandthecity@nyas.org

CHAPTER THREE: HOW THE INVESTIGATION WAS PURSUED

Previous work

My early work, as a painter and printmaker, drew inspiration from the Western Australian landscape and sought to comment on the impact of mining and introduced species on that landscape. More recently, my printmaking has focused on alienation and displacement within the urban environment. This work has been characterised by my desire for an aesthetic giving expression to my underlying concerns.



67. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Changing Rooms 1*. 2003. Woodblock print. 75 x 278 cm.



68. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Imagining The City 1*. 2003. Woodblock, paint, crayon. 50 x 360 cm.

My printmaking practice

Experimentation has always been an important part of my printmaking practice. Even in my foundation training as a printmaker I felt the need to combine traditional techniques with the more experimental. In concert, my painting style was formed and influenced by the Abstract Expressionists. I connect to the more emotive response that resounds out of their style. This, in part, has influenced the way I make marks and surfaces in my printmaking. By combining intaglio and relief techniques on the same surface I strive to create prints that possess a tactile and evocative feel to them.

Many of my prints are large. I believe subconsciously that the printing plate works similar to a canvas. I work as a painter on large canvasses and it then feels natural to similarly work on large printing plates. I am not content working at a small scale; working at large scale fuels my practice. Using multi-part assemblages has evolved in my practice because of the need to create larger works. I am restricted by available paper size, so it is then logical to assemble pieces together to create larger works. It also, at the same time, creates a more powerful physical presence.

My prints are usually unique state because I enjoy working with the image changes that occur constantly through the process with each subsequent proofing. The use of screenprinting is a technique that I have not used in recent work because of lack of necessary equipment. It has been used in this body of work. I have replicated the borrowed images by screenprinting. These were then placed within layers created by other printmaking techniques. I chose to use solvent-based screenprinting inks because of their ability to appear raised on the paper surface. Additionally, they work well when printed over with etched and collagraphed plates.

The origins of the project

The project began by investigating the connections between nature, art and science inspired by seeing the work of Finnish artist Osmo Rauhala. His paintings, prints and video installations compel viewers to reconsider their relationship to the natural world.

I see his work as carefully considered, and yet poetic, making me aware of the care and concern we must place on conserving nature. Rauhala arranges his work like information panels; a subtle narrative reads through the configuration of the images. I did not want to copy Rauhala's work but, instead, to use it as a point of departure for my printmaking.

My intention was to investigate how concepts and visions of nature have been discoursed through the fusion of art and science. Looking at science as a source of inspiration posed questions. Could I interpret scientific imagery sufficiently so that I could incorporate it successfully into my printmaking? Could this imagery engage me for the project's duration? Would it become a successful vehicle through which to convey my environmental concerns in relation to global warming, climatic change, pollution and species depletion?

Nature has always been the inspiration for my arts practice; referencing science into my work was a new direction. I have had only a mild interest in science; I have never studied the sciences in any great depth, as it always seemed to be too analytical for me. I remember my own fascination and curiosity with nature as a child. I was happiest collecting frogspawn in big jam jars and watching it transform into tadpoles and then into frogs. I am continually intrigued and awed by the mysteries of nature. I believe that viewing nature is not only cognitive but emotional as well, creating an understanding and appreciation of the natural world.



69. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005
Collagraph, 120 x 160 cm.



70. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005
Collagraph, 120 x 80 cm.



71. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005
Etching, 120 x 80 cm.

In the early stages of the project I drew upon the microscopic and macroscopic imagery of the natural world as my primary visual resource material, exemplified in (69, 70, 71). My intention was not in representing this imagery directly but to translate it into a new expression. I am attracted by the mystique these images provide; they come from the unseen world of nature, and it is a world that we cannot see without magnification and it is not physically experienced. Nature is usually thought of as what is seen and physically experienced in the natural environment; technology has provided an artificial eye allowing us to see these hidden secrets of nature.

In the writings of Charles Darwin⁷⁰ and James Gleick⁷¹ I was captivated by certain words and terms such as random, cosmogenesis, strange attractors, doubtful species and modes of transition; words that conjured up quite strange and fantastic images for me. I tried to create a visual interpretation of these words through my mark-making. These initial prints were a direct response to these descriptive words, combined with what I saw in the microscopic and macroscopic photography. The words and images became the catalyst for the creation of the works. My intent was not to literally interpret these visual and literary sources but to create abstractions from them.



72. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Cosmogenesis I*. 2005.
Intaglio collagraph, 220 x 80 cm.



73. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Hammada*. 2005.
Intaglio collagraph. 240 x 90 cm.

I consider that my response to these words and images was captured in the printmaking process that gouged, obliterated, layered and impressed themselves into the surface of the paper. I was satisfied with the emotive content of the images per se.

⁷⁰ Charles Darwin. *The Origin of the Species*. Mentor Books: New York, 1958.

⁷¹ James Gleick. *Chaos: Making a New Science*. Penguin: New York, 1988.

Development of the project

In a book by Felice Frankel⁷² I found many captivating images. The images were artistically presented by comparison to other scientific books. Her book is full of stunning micro and macroscopic images of crystals, organisms, liquids, bacteria and organic matter. One of the main messages that came through in Frankel's book was that of the attention placed on the aesthetic quality in producing the images. I used these images as a point of departure in the further development of my work. My initial approach in response to this visual material was in wood block printing, a process that allows for printing in multiple layers of colours, relatively quickly and easily. I started by abstracting some of the organic forms. I then drew these forms onto plywood, cut out with the aid of a bench top saw. Using the saw was a new experience and took a while to master. I progressively printed the wooden plates using transparent coloured inks in layers. This process of layered printing created a sense of things evolving; forms agitating together in an imaginary space.



74. Yvonne Rees-Pagh.
Artist proof. 2005.
Collagraph, variable sizes.

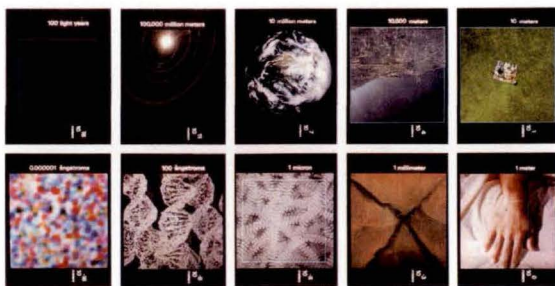


75. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Untitled*. 2005
Collagraph, woodblock print, paint, crayon.
120 x 240 cm.



76. Yvonne Rees-Pagh.
Artist proof. 2005.
Woodblock, water based
pigment ink, variable sizes.

The film, *Powers of Ten* by Charles and Ray Eames⁷³, provides cinematic images that I find inspiring. The film shows how, in nature, complexity exists at various scales from the galactic to the sub atomic⁷⁴. The film transports you from your connected position on the earth to the outer edges of the universe. Every ten seconds you are shifted to a



77. Stills from the Eames' short film *Powers of Ten*. Zooms sequence from the outer galaxy to DNA nucleotides.

new viewpoint, starting with the picture of the Eames' picnicking on the green grass. Then every ten seconds you become ten times farther out, until you see our own planet visible only as a speck of light among many others.

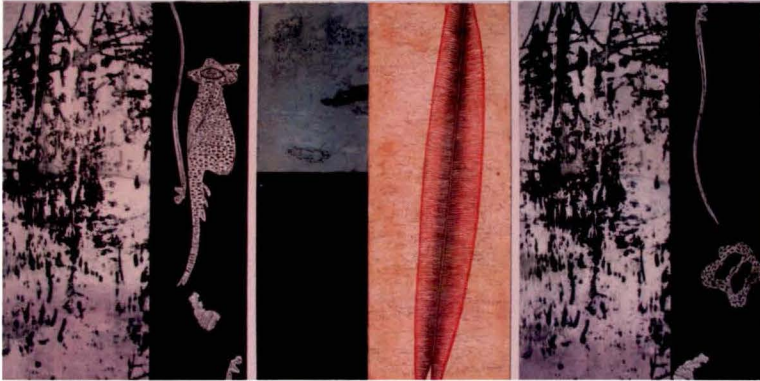
⁷² Felice Frankel. *Envisioning Science: The design and craft of the science image*. MIT Press: 2002.

⁷³ Charles and Ray Eames. *The Films of Charles & Ray Eames: Volume 1: Powers of Ten*.

MM Image Entertainment Inc: Chatsworth CA.

⁷⁴ Greg Judelman. *Aesthetics and Inspiration for Visualization Design: Bridging the Gap between Art and Science*. Eighth International Conference on Information Visualisation, 2004. 245-250.

Seeing the Eames' images side by side as a sequence in Donald Albrecht's book⁷⁵ revealed to me the enormous complexity of our natural universe. The presentation of these images provided ideas for configurations that I could use in my work. Displaying microscopic and macroscopic elements together creates intriguing visual associations for the viewer; ambiguous juxtapositions can prompt a myriad of interpretations. Using this strategy I started making up new assemblages of the prints I had created.



78. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Evolution 1*. 2005
Intaglio collagraph, etching, linoprint. 120 x 270 cm.

This proved to be an interesting exercise, but I was still not convinced I was on the right path. It posed the question as to whether I was using the right visual images to express my environmental concerns. I decided to break away from using these rigid techniques and returned to using collagraph processes on large metal plates. Again my main objective was to capture the essence of natural phenomena both creatively and spontaneously.

I started to experiment using a mold making liquid latex to act as a resist on the printing paper. This was a conscious effort to break away from creating hard-edged forms.



79. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005.
Latex print with collagraph overlay.
120 x 160 cm.

I applied the latex with brushes onto printing paper that had previously been sprayed with a mold resist solution; this was in order to stop any possible damage to the paper when peeling off the latex. When the latex had dried I then printed a collagraph plate over the raised rubbery forms; when the printing ink was dry I then pulled off the latex to reveal the paper. Repeating this process a few times allowed the shapes to become transformed

with each subsequent overprinting. Chance played a key factor as nothing was pre-planned, so the work evolved through the process. Though substantially different to the previous work I still felt unsatisfied with the result.

⁷⁵ Donald Albrecht ed. *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames*. Harry N Abrams: New York, 1997, 110-111.

My next move was to use polyester resin applied to the metal surface with various types of brushes, sticks, and feathers; these resinous marks were then sprinkled with carborundum. When printed intaglio it gave a good strong printout of the gestural marks; it appeared more immediate and expressive. By employing this approach I felt that, in some way, the pure serendipity of the mark-making could take on the same energy as nature's elemental forces. I began experimenting with making new marks.



80. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Transmutation*. 2005
Intaglio collagraph, 80 x 180 cm.

I tried dripping the resin from the top of the metal plates, allowing the rivulets of resin to flow down the plates the full length of them. Watching them drip, I decided not to intervene or to manipulate their flow in any way.

I connected these slow moving resinous drips to the fact that everything in nature is either rising or falling. I further experimented with different panel arrangement configurations in the emergence of these works



81. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *First proof*. 2005.
Intaglio collagraph, 120 x 240 cm.



82. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *First proof*. 2005.
Intaglio collagraph, 120 x 240 cm.

After contemplating the first proofings of these plates I decided that the dripped lines looked like dense forest vegetation. I reworked the plates to add further line work that



83. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Cosmogensis II*. 2005
Intaglio collagraph. 120 x 240 cm.

would suggest animal forms; creatures partly hidden and merging into the forest growth. I thought about the times I had caught glimpses of wild animals as I peered through dense scrub; the stories of the Thylacine sightings here in Tasmania came to mind.

At this stage of the project I felt it was time to install a selection of my work to date in a gallery space, to get a sense of how they would look juxtaposed together on the walls. Viewing the works in the gallery allowed for valuable reflection on the aims of the project. I was satisfied with the surfaces I had created, but still felt a need to introduce more of a narrative within the work.



84. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. Installation of selected works. Sandy Bay Gallery, University of Tasmania, 2005.

I then decided to experiment by combining expressionist printmaking techniques with more representational images of environmental degradation.



85. Yvonne Rees-Pagh.
From Ancient Tides. 2005
Etching, collagraph, linoprint.
270 x 120 cm.

This experiment resulted in the work *From Ancient Tides* (85), a work consisting of three joined panels, produced by a layered combination of collagraph, etching and lino printing techniques. The work was based on photographs showing the accelerated deterioration of the coral reefs caused by pollution, physical interference and the rise of sea temperatures. The work alludes to the live coral going through changing physical states to its ultimate death. I pinpoint this work specifically because I felt I had actually subtly pushed through an environmental message.

I then found myself coming back to Rauhala's narrative style, by employing a more stylistic and simplified use of form and content. I calmed down my gestural mark making and introduced more defined images. I began by introducing flat panels of black or colour, either in the same composition or as separate panels. This approach is evident in my work *Cloning 1* (86), which is based on the genetic engineering of canaries; this practice that has been going on for over seventy years.



86. Yvonne Rees-Pagh.
Cloning 1. 2005. Collagraph,
monoprint, mixed media.
120 x 180 cm.

I experimented with rearranging and interchanging the panels in order to create conflicting sensations and meanings. These works were beginning to feel successful but I still felt I needed another visual lead that would push the work into a stronger narrative direction.

At this point I decided that relying on scientific imagery alone as my visual resource was not allowing me to realise my aims.

The transition to the latest work

It was at this time that I travelled to Russia and visited the Tsar Peter The Great's Kunstkammer in St. Petersburg, as previously discussed. Following my return to Tasmania, in the process of my research I discovered that a large part of this collection had been purchased from Albertus Seba. The objects of this collection had, indeed, been the subject of a considerable number of Seba's natural history illustrations. It was this revelation that sparked my research into the art of natural history illustrations, as explored in chapter one.

The inspiration for my work turned to the 'dictionary' of natural history illustrations by the illustrators I subsequently researched. The challenge for me was whether I could transform these historic images into a new expression and, indeed, could they assist in working towards the narrative I am striving to embody in my work? Considering the aesthetic appeal of these natural history illustrations, the challenge was also how to imbue this imagery, frozen in time, with a new life and meaning for a contemporary audience.

In the first instance I looked to the work of Albertus Seba. It was the surreal and slightly quirky quality in Seba's images and compositions that drew me to his work in the first instance. In appropriating his images, the image transfer technique options were either using digital technology or using photo silk-screening. I chose silk-screening because I still wanted to have the sensation of actual touching the paper, and of pushing the image through the silk. I have always liked the little discrepancies that can occur to the image when using silk-screening techniques, and I wasn't after a perfect copy of the appropriated image. I started by photocopying the images and then enlarging them for transfer onto the silk screen. In doing this I found that a slight distortion occurred to the original image; this change to the original form intrigued me. With some of the photocopies I cut out parts and replaced them with parts taken from other images. By doing this I felt I had created a new type of being. Also, in placing these images in curious juxtapositions that appear contradictory, I sought to set up the feelings of anxiety and disbelief. I wanted to express these emotions in the works.

The first Seba image that I used was a species of chameleon. I chose Seba's illustration of the chameleon posed on a branch, with a strange expression on its face. I liked a particular reference made by the 17th century Dutch naturalist Isaac Schookius, who compared the chameleon's transformation to a form of theatrical representation; in

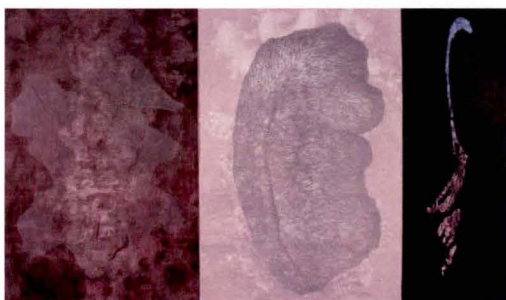
his stating “just as an actor puts on a mask”⁷⁶, he inferred that the chameleon’s masquerading qualities could be likened to humans acting.



87. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Chameleon*. 2006. Etching and silkscreen. 82 x 240 cm.

I also chose the chameleon as a symbol of nature; just as the chameleon changes and adapts, so does nature. In placing it alongside its own skeleton I make reference to the fact that many species of chameleon are now threatened with extinction, due mainly to the destruction of their forest habitats.

The unusual Seba illustration of the Tongue sponge looks like a giant hairy tongue.



88. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Tongue Sponge (Centre)* 2006. Collagraph, silkscreen, 120 x 190 cm.

When I blew up this image it began to look like some sort of legless bear. I transferred the image onto a silkscreen and screened it onto a monoprint background. I decided I would print a few of these solitary creatures, to be used to create strange juxtapositions in the final exhibition.

I also experimented with Seba’s image of the Siphonochalina; a surreal ocean form, resembling a strange alien. I juxtaposed this in arrangements with scientifically derived images.



89. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Evolution 2*. 2006. Intaglio collagraph, silkscreen, etching. 120 x 210 cm.



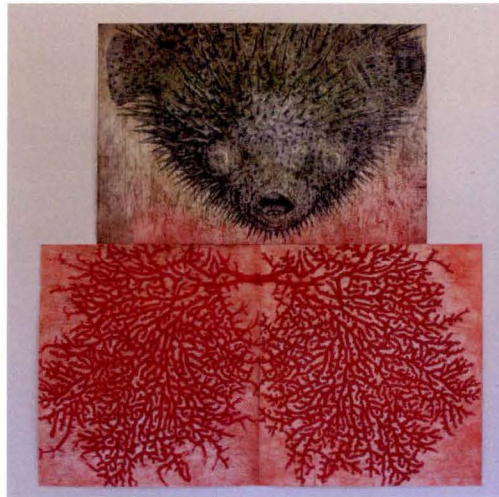
90. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Siphonochalina*. 2006. Etching, aquatint, sugar lift, silkscreen. 120 x 270 cm.

⁷⁶ Paula Findlen. *Possessing Nature*. University of California Press: California, 1996, 300.

Searching through a drawer one day I found a small stuffed Puffer fish, complete with a small hat, that I had been given as a present few years ago, and had completely forgotten about. As I looked at its face, with its ogling eyes and open mouth, it looked like it was aghast at something, probably at being stuffed. It saddened me to think of animals being made into cheap souvenirs, particularly when they are now on the endangered list. Coincidentally, there was a wonderful Seba drawing of a Puffer fish. It had the same look on its face as my little souvenir. It inspired me to make a print of it. I then experimented with different assemblages, including combining it with one of Seba's coral formations.



91. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Puffer Fish*. 2006
Monoprint, silkscreen. 160 x 120 cm.



92. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Puffer Fish*. 2007.
Etching and silkscreen. 190 x 180 cm.

Deadly Bloom (93) is loosely based on a watercolour of a rose by Georg Flegel (1566-1638). I inverted the bloom and exaggerated its size, wanting to create a bloom that was oversized and menacing; I wanted it to be the fatal attraction. I introduced the toad, insects and larvae in the manner of Maria Sibylla Merian. Creating a scale large print was important; I wanted to convey a disquieting and menacing sensation. The bloom is



93. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Deadly Bloom*. 2007.
Etching, woodblock, linocut, silkscreen.
185 x 240 cm.

not meant to feel real. I wanted to allude to the manipulation of plants in order to create larger and stronger mutations. There is danger lurking here? Who is the predator?

The bloom petals were printed using nineteen separate plywood overlays to create the form. Background, insects, toad and bud were printed using etching, linoprint and screenprinting techniques.



94. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Crocodile*. 2006. Etching, aquatint, 240 x 82 cm.

Crocodiles were a common exhibit in Wunderkammern. They were at that time regarded as exotic large lizards. Stuffed and mounted, often suspended from the wonder room ceiling, they were symbolically used as protector and keeper of the collection, waiting and ready to attack any unwelcome visitors.

Based on an image by Seba, *Crocodile* (94) shows a crocodile slithering up, whilst another waits ominously in the egg below. The dark background creates an aura of mystery, as does the creature in the egg. I made the egg deliberately oversized in comparison to the crocodile in order to allude to some sort of genetic abnormality. The work alludes to something strange happening; things are not what they appear to be.

For this work I hand drew the crocodile and egg onto the prepared ground of two large metal plates, and then etched in strong acid. I then aquatinted and etched again. Achieving a black printout was important in the creation of a sense of strangeness and unreality.

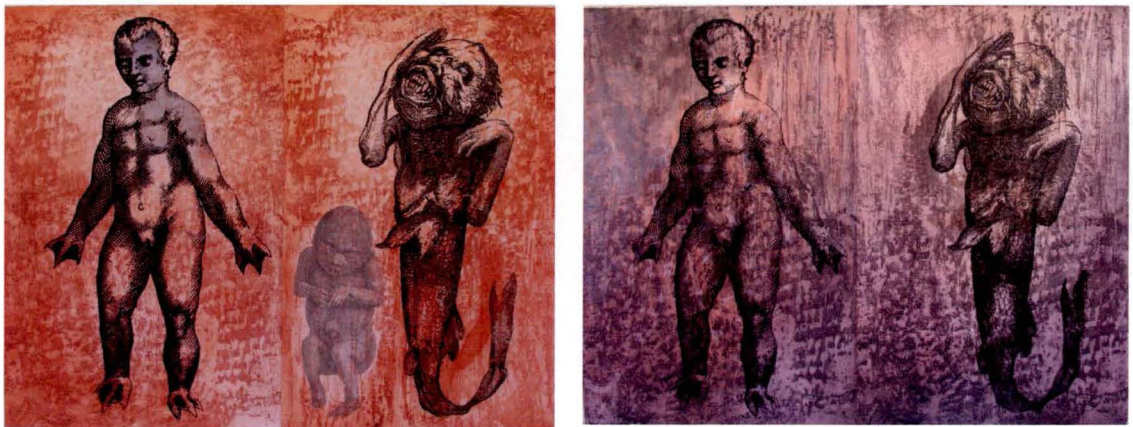
The Fertility Trap (95) alludes to the depletion of frog species throughout the world. It is about life and death. The frog appear standing, although in Seba's drawing it lies horizontal. The vertical stance of the frog, in a way, brings it to life. Their large size places importance on them. The central panel shows two cane toads mating; the male sperm snakes down the surface. He, the cane toad, is a survivor; an introduced species that is playing havoc in our environment.



95. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *The Fertility Trap*. 2006 Etching, silkscreen, hand colouring. 120 x 220 cm.

At this time, I recalled the memory of the freak human specimens I had seen in the Wunderkammer. I thought about how we humans are prone to genetic diseases, as are animals. There is always the possibility of a glitch occurring in our DNA sequence. It is a matter entirely beyond our control.

My last works use images of human freaks and hybrid beings, appropriated from illustrations by Seba and two unknown artists. These are strange and weird images of creatures drawn from myths and stories. Sometimes fabricated effigies of these creatures were displayed in the Wunderkammer. The illustrations and the effigies undermined accepted systems of classification and understanding of their time. They would have created bewilderment, as they did not connect to the then known reality. I believe that, because of their freakishness, they still have this effect on contemporary viewers. In juxtaposing these human freak and hybrid being images, I sought to shift the viewer's sensation from that of confusion to the cynical. I connect this reaction to our understanding that we could end up looking like this from the effects of pollution or genetic engineering.



96. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Wail Of The Feejee*. 2007.
Etching, silkscreen. 120 x 160 cm.

As I near completion of the project I reflect on my stated aims. In searching to find a visual language that could evoke attention on the aspects of my environmental concerns, I have embarked on an intriguing visual journey. As stated earlier in my paper, I was not trying to create any strong political voice on environmental concerns. Rather, I wanted the work to speak softly and evocatively, and to stimulate awareness of my concerns.

In removing these images from their original context, and displacing them into a new, a new meaning has in many cases, I believe, emerged; just as real as the former one. Initially this throws the senses into confusion, but then exerts a peculiar attraction; it is this that gives new meaning to the work.

The appropriation of historic imagery towards communicating my environmental concerns in my work has, I believe, been partially successful. It has been an experiment that has pushed me into new exploration within my printmaking practice.

The exhibition

The final stage of the project focused on the planning of the exhibition. The display strategy adopted identifies conceptually with the strategy of the Wunderkammer. Using the Wunderkammer as metaphor, the work is presented in a thematic journey. The final selection and arrangement of the works to be exhibited emerged through much experimentation with alternative hanging arrangements within the gallery space.

The juxtaposition of disparate objects in the Wunderkammer made people stop, contemplate and think about the complexity and wonders of nature. I seek to create a powerful physical presence within the gallery space by juxtaposing my individual works to set up what is, hopefully, a heightened feeling of wonder and awe. I seek a visual interaction between the individual works towards creating an experience where the whole conveys a greater message than the individual parts. I seek to make the viewer search for connections; if they do not read them easily then they have to work it out.

The exhibition is presented in two conjoined gallery spaces. The space upon entering displays three works from the initial phase of my project. These are deliberately hung in isolation from each other; they stand alone as representative of the early development of my work.



97. Plimsoll Gallery Exhibition Photograph 1

Flowing through into the main space, the eye is greeted by the custodial crocodile; a reflection harking back to the Wunderkammer. The works in the main space are presented in the manner of the Wunderkammer. The juxtaposition of the seemingly disparate works invites deciphering and interpretation by the viewer.



98. Plimsoll Gallery Exhibition Photograph 2

Have we lost the capacity to think about and wonder at the complexities of nature? Have we disconnected ourselves from nature, and with what dire consequences? Osmo Rauhala believes that visual imagery can reveal important information, hidden within, regarding our relationship with the world around us. He argues that

*The need for explanation still exists, and we have rather less answers available on the emotional level, in spite of our vast amounts of factual information on various phenomena.*⁷⁷

Art is a means of transferring such information on an emotional level. Hopefully the exhibition can, in a small way, connect viewers with the wonder and awe of nature.

⁷⁷ Osmo Rauhala. Op. cit, 89.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The aim of this project has been to explore the potential of using historically derived imagery as sources in my printmaking, with the objective of creating a narrative that is both aesthetic and provocative. The visual imagery has been sourced from contemporary scientific imagery, the Wunderkammer, and natural history illustrations. This research has taken me on a journey in which I have discovered a vast repository of unique imagery illustrating the complexity and beauty of nature

In my printmaking, I chose to make a commentary on environmental issues not through any strong political voice, but instead by way of a subtle and disquietening narrative. Rather than creating an obvious message, I sought to provoke thoughts and contemplation at a more spiritual level. Has my printmaking been effective in drawing attention to my environmental concerns? The early work is largely representational, with little underlying narrative. The middle phase conveys a degree of narrative, albeit relying to some extent on the title of the work to establish connection. I believe that the latter work, drawing on historically derived imagery, succeeds to a varying degree, perhaps most successfully in the puffer fish and feejee works. It remains to be tested as to whether the narrative can be read by the viewer, dependant as it is not only on the power of the work, but also on the viewer's awareness. Hopefully, embodying characteristics of the 'strange' in my imagery has created a sense wonder and awe.

Of the contemporary visual artists researched, who appropriate similar ideas and imagery to my own, I consider only Mark Dion, Kiki Smith, Milan Milojevic and Walton Ford have really been successful in conveying an intriguing narrative. Noticeably Smith and Milojevic are the only printmakers I have been able to identify in this regard. The appropriation of natural history illustrations is evident in the work of many other artists, though few, for me, give expression to matters related to my own underlying concerns.

What has the Wunderkammer display systems offered to my exhibition? This display methodology, with its strategy of juxtaposing disparate objects, has provided me with an appropriate creative and dynamic exhibition approach, towards conveying a feeling of wonder and awe. I am satisfied that the exhibition strategy has worked as well as I could have hoped for.

This project has taken my printmaking in a new direction that I wish to further pursue. There are still many more works I want to make from the vast repository of visual material I have unearthed. All of this sits patiently in the pages of historic volumes, awaiting my future act of appropriation into the layered surface of my prints.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Albrecht, Donald ed *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames* Harry N Abrams: New York, 1997
- Asma, Stephen T. *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2001
- Baker, Steve. *The Postmodern Animal* Reaktion Books: London, 2000
- Bandi, Hans-Georg *The Art Of The Stone Age*. Methuen: London, 1961.
- Bennett, Tony. *Pasts Beyond Memory, Evolution, Museums, Colonialism*. Routledge: London, 2004.
- Blom, Philipp. *To Have And To Hold*. The Overlook Press: New York, 2003.
- Briedbach, Olaf. *Brief Instructions to Viewing Haeckel's Pictures*. Prestel Publications: Munich, 1998.
- Brody, David *Ernst Haeckel and the Microbial Baroque*. Cabinet Magazine, Issue 7, Summer 2002.
- Carroll, Sean B. *Endless Forms Most Beautiful* Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 2006.
- Chadwick, Whitney. *Women, Art and Society*. Thames and Hudson: London, 1996.
- Cobb, Edith. *Wonder as the Genesis of Knowledge*. Columbia University Press. New York, 1977.
- Cutler, Alan. *The Seashell On The Mountaintop*. Arrow Books: United Kingdom, 2003.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of the Species* Mentor Books New York, 1958.
- Daston, L. *Curiosity in early modern science*. In: *Word and Image*. 11:4, 1995.
- Daston, L and Park, K. *Wonders and the Order of Nature* Zone Books. New York, 1998.
- Daston, Lorraine. *Things That Talk*. Zone Books: New York, 2004.
- Dawkins, Richard *The Ancestor's Tale*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 2005
- Dion, Mark. *Science and the Eclipse of the Earth*. Circa Art Magazine. Ireland, 2001.
- Ede, Sian *Art and Science* I.B.Taurus & Co Ltd Publishing: New York, 2005.
- Fahr-Becker, Gabriele. *Art Nouveau*. Konemann: Koln, 1997
- Findlen, Paula. *Possessing Nature*. University of California Press: California, 1996
- Fisher, P. *The Poetics of Wonder, Meaning in the Visual Arts: Views from the Outside* | Lavin, ed.,
Institute for Advanced Study. Princeton, 1995
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. Routledge: London, 1970.
- Frankel, Felice. *Envisioning Science: The design and craft of the science image*
MIT Press Massachusetts 2002.
- Gale, Matthew *Dada & Surrealism*. Phaidon Press: London, 1997
- Gamwell, Lynn. *Exploring the Invisible. Art, Science and the Spiritual*.
Princeton University Press: USA, 2002
- Gleick, James *Chaos: Making a New Science* Penguin: New York, 1988
- Goldyne, Joseph R. *Cabinets Of Curiosities: Four Artists, Four Visions*.
Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin: Madison, 2000.
- Gould, Jay *Finders Keepers: Treasures and Oddities of Natural History Collectors from Peter the Great to Louis Agassiz*. W W Norton: New York, 1992
- Graham-Dixon, Andrew. *Renaissance* BBC Worldwide Ltd: London, 1999.

Greenblatt, S. *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Chicago University Press: Chicago, 1991.

Greenblatt, S. *Resonance and Wonder* In *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D Lavine. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington DC, 1991.

Goldyne, Joseph and Thomas Garver. *Cabinets of Curiosities, Four Artists, Four Visions*. Elvehjem Museum of Art Publication: USA, 2000.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *I have Landed, Splashes and Reflections in Natural History* Vintage Publishing U.K, 2003.

Haeckel, Ernst. *Art Nouveau*. Fahr-Becker Konemann: Koln, 1997.

Haeckel, Ernst. *Art Forms in Nature*. Prestel Verlag: Munich, 1998.

Haeckel, Ernst. *Art Forms from the Ocean* Prestel Verlag: Munich, 1899.

Haftmann, Werner. *Painting in the Twentieth Century Volume 1* Lund Humphries. London, 1965.

Hallegraef, Gustaaf. *Plankton: A critical creation*. University of Tasmania Hobart, 2006

Hart-Davis, Duff. *Audubon's Elephant* Weidenfeld & Nicolson: United Kingdom, 2003.

Hay, Peter. *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought* UNSW Press: Australia, 2002.

Hollander, E. *Wunder, Wundergeburrt und Wundergestalt*. Stuttgart, 1921

Isaacs, Jennifer *Australia's Living Heritage: Arts of the dreaming*. Lansdowne Sydney, 1984.

Judelman, Greg. *Aesthetics and Inspiration for Visualization Design. Bridging the Gap between Art and Science* Eighth International Conference on Information Visualisation, 2004.

Huey, M *Medusa Man World of Interiors*. May Edition 1999.

Jackson, Christine E *Sarah Stone, Natural Curiosities from the New Worlds*. Merrell Holberton Publishers London, 1998.

Lomas, David. *Mark Dion's Surrealist Legacy*. Dionarticle indd 2005

Lippincott, Louise and Bluhm, Andreas *Fierce Friends, Artists and Animals 1750-1900*. Merrell Publishers: London, 2005

Mauries, Patrick. *Cabinets of Curiosities*. Thames & Hudson Ltd: London, 2002.

Mendel, David. *Changing Art Changing Man*. Horizon Press: New York, 1967.

Mogelon, Alex and Laliberte *Art In Boxes* Van Nostrand Reinhold Company. New York, 1974.

Musch, Dr Irmgard *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* Taschen Press: Koln, 2005.

Neuhart, John. *Eames Design: The work of the office of Charles and Ray Eames*. Harry N Abrams: New York, 1989.

Olalqiaga, Celeste. *The Artificial Kingdom, A Treasury of the Kitsch Experience*. Bloomsbury Publishing London, 1999.

Pinault, Madeleine *The Painter As Naturalist*. Flammarion Press: Paris, 1991.

Plato. *The Dialogues of Plato*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1953.

Pollan, Andrea *Hidden Worlds, Other Views*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1991.

Purcell, Rosamond. *Swift As A Shadow: Extinct and Endangered Animals*. Mariner Books: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999

Putman, James. *Art And Artefact: The Museum As Medium* Thames & Hudson London, 2001.

Rauhala, Osmo. *Nature Science and Art*. Otava Publishing Co Ltd Helsinki, 2003.

- Renshaw, Amanda ed. *Heaven & Earth: Unseen by the naked eye*. Phaidon Press: New York, 2002, 40
- Riemschneider, Burkhard and Grosenick, Uta ed. *Art Now*. Taschen: Köln, 2001
- Seba, Albertus. *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities*. The complete plates in colour. 1734-1765.
- Spies, Werner *Max Ernst. LopLop*. Thames and Hudson: Great Britain, 1983.
- Spies, Werner. *Max Ernst. Collages* Thames and Hudson. Great Britain, 1991.
- Stafford, Barbara Maria. *Good Looking: Essays on the Virtue of Images*. The MIT Press: Massachusetts, 1997.
- Stafford, Maria Barbara and Terpak, Frances *Devices of Wonder: From the world in a box to images on a screen* Getty Publications Los Angeles, 2001
- Swan, Claudia. *Art, Science and Witchcraft in Early Holland* Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005.
- Thoreau, Henry Thomas. *Walden*. Alfred Knopf Publishing: USA, new edition, 1992.
- Topsell, Edward. *The Historie of Four Footed Beastes and Serpents and Insects*. Da Capo Press: New York, 1967 (Facsimile of original edition: William Laggard: London 1607) .
- Van den Beukel, Dorine. *Designs Of Nature* The Pepin Press. Amsterdam. 1997.
- Waldman, Diane. *Joseph Cornell, Master of Dreams* Harry N Abrams: New York, 2002.
- Weitman, Wendy *Kiki Smith Prints, Books & Things* The Museum of Modern Art: New York, 2003.
- Weschler, Lawrence. *Mr Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*. Vintage Books: New York, 1996.
- Woodring, Carl *Nature Into Art* Harvard University Press: USA, 1989.
- Wye, Deborah. *Thinking Print: Books To Billboards 1980-95*. Museum Of Modern Art: New York, 1996

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

- A Cabinet of Curostities* The New York Public Library: New York, 2002

FILMS

- Eames, Charles and Ray. *The Films of Charles & Ray Eames. Volume 1: Powers of Ten*. MM Image Entertainment Inc: Chatsworth CA

WEBSITES

- Chu, Jeff. *It's a Jungle In There*. Time Magazine, December 17 2001.
<http://www.umu.se/edmeas/hprov/05a/elf.html>

- Ford, Walton.
www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/tigers_of_wrath

- Lienhard, John *Topsell's Beasts*.
<http://www.uh.edu/engines/epi1586.htm>

- Purcell, Rosamund.
<http://www.smmao.org>

- Purcell, Rosamund. 2003
<http://ftapies.com/wp/wordpress>

- Smith, Kiki. 1994.
<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/6aa/6aa177.htm>

- scienceandthecity@nyas.org

- Tomaselli, Fred. 2004.
<http://www.fruitmarket.com.uk/archive3>

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Leak skeleton (magnolia leaf) Microscope photograph Magnified x 20.
2. Levin Vincent Wunderkammer. Published 1706.
3. Ernst Haeckel *Discomedusae*. Coloured lithograph
4. Lizard-like Aboriginal rock painting Hawker, South Australia.
5. Knotweed pollen (*Polygonum*). Electron micrograph.
6. Old Mother Shipton's Cave Knaresborough, Yorkshire.
7. *Wunderkammer Siciliana* 17th C. Galleria Regionale della Italian Sicilia-Palermo
8. Olaus Worm. *Musei Wormiani Historia*. 1665. Original copper engraving.
9. Caspar Friedrich Neikel. *Museographica*. 1727.
- 10 Sarah Stone. Interior of Sir Ashton Lever's Museum, Leicester House, London. Watercolour and coloured ink. 1787
11. Abnormalities in nature Kunstkammera. St. Petersburg, Russia. Photograph by writer, 2005.
12. Natural history collection. Kunstkammera. St. Petersburg, Russia. Photograph by writer, 2005.
- 13 Edward Topsell. *The Fabled Mantichora* From *The Historie of Four Footed Beastes and Serpents and Insects*. 1607
14. Maria Sibylla Merian. *Metamorphosis of a Frog*. c 1700. Guache & watercolour on velum.
- 15 Albertus Seba. *Foetus of Asiatic elephant, human and pig*.
- 16 Albertus Seba. *Fantasy Animal: Hydra*
- 17 Albertus Seba. *Siamese Goat Twins and Twin Monstrous Cats*
18. Albertus Seba Zoological illustration. 1734.
19. Ernst Haeckel. *Radiolarians* Lithograph
- 20 Ernst Haeckel. *Dictyophora Basimycetes*. Lithograph
21. Edward Topsell. *Carnivorous hippopotamus*. 1607.
22. Maria Sibylla Merian. *Metamorphosis insectorum surinamensium*. 1705.
23. Albertus Seba. *Corallium rubrum*. Circa 1750
24. Ernst Haeckel *Thalassicolla pelagica*. 1862
25. Max Ernst. *Facility*. Also *Loplop Introduces*. 1931. Collage, 64.5 x 50 cm.
- 26 Visual source material employed by Max Ernst
27. Max Ernst. *La Dame Ovale*. 1939. Collage
- 28 Visual source material employed by Max Ernst.
29. Max Ernst. *The Hundred Headless Woman* 1929. Collage.
30. Joseph Cornell *Untitled*. 1946. Construction, 317 x 254 x 110 cm.
- 31 Joseph Cornell. *Untitled*. 1942. Construction, 333 x 254 x 89 cm.
32. Milan Milojevic. *Bird Tree*. 2004 Digital, woodcut diptych. 40 x 60 cm.
33. Osmo Rauhala. *Lost Paradise*. 1990, oil and wax, 26 x 26 cm.

- 34 Mark Dion *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy* 2005. Installation
- 35 Walton Ford. *Dirty Dick Burton's Aide de Camp*. 2002. Watercolour.
- 36 Osmo Rauhala *Interval* 1994 Oil and wax, 210 x 210 cm
37. Osmo Rauhala. *Things Lost in Air* 1995, Monotypic, 20 x 60 cm.
38. Osmo Rauhala. *Things Lost in Fire III*. 1995, Monotypic, 30 x 70 cm.
39. Osmo Rauhala, *Space with Shifting Boundaries I* 1996 Oil and wax, 240 x 498 cm.
- 40 Osmo Rauhala, *Space with Shifting Boundaries II*, 1996 Oil and wax, 240 x 498 cm.
41. Osmo Rauhala *The Birth of a River-The Ganges*. 1993, Oil 166 x 488 cm
42. Osmo Rauhala *System Complexity*. 2006, Video installation. Eeva Pinomaa Gallery, Finland
43. Mark Dion. *Cabinet of Curiosities* 1997. Installation view, Photo: Richard K. Loesch.
- 44 Mark Dion. *Tar and Feathers*. 1996 Tree, wooden base, tar, feathers, various taxidermic animals.
- 45 Mark Dion. *Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy*. 2005. Installation. Manchester Museum
46. Mark Dion & Robert Williams *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium*. 2001. Installation.
47. Mark Dion *Taxonomy of Non-endangered Species*. 1990, Mixed media installation.
48. Mark Dion. *Arctic Hall*. 1991-2002, Mixed media installation.
- 49 Rosamund Purcell *Conjoined Twins*. 2003, Photograph.
- 50 Olaus Worm. *Musei Wormiani Historia*. 1665. Original copper engraving.
51. Rosamund Purcell. *Worm's Room*. 2002. Installation.
- 52 Rosamund Purcell *Rosamund's Room* 2002. Installation (part image)
53. Rosamund Purcell. *The Last Passenger Pigeon*. 1999, Cibachrome print, 16 x 20".
54. Kiki Smith. *Peabody (Animal Drawings)*. 1996, Installation detail, floor piece of multiple layers of etchings on handmade Nepalese paper, composition and sheet. Various dimensions
55. Kiki Smith. *The Fourth Day: Destruction of Birds*. 1997. Etchings for Artist's book
56. Kiki Smith *White Mammals*. 1998, etching on mold-made Hahnemuhle paper, ea 81.3 x 45.7 cm.
57. Kiki Smith with Susanna Moore. Untitled plates from *Hunters and Gatherers*. 2003 Etching and aquatint, 33 x 21.3 cm
58. Walton Ford. *Ricordazione-Vinci 1452* 2005. Watercolour, gouache, ink and pencil on paper. 109 x 158 cm
59. Walton Ford. *Le Jardin*. 2005, Watercolour, gouache, pencil and ink on paper, 242 x 461 cm.
60. Walton Ford *Lost Trophy*. 2005, Watercolour, gouache, ink and pencil on paper, 242 x 461 cm.
- 61 Walton Ford. *Falling Bough*. 2002. Watercolour, ink and pencil on paper, 60 x 119 cm.
62. Walton Ford *Dirty Dick Burton's Aide de Camp*. 2002. Watercolour.
63. Philip Taaffe. *Interzonal Leaves* 1998. Mixed media, 203 x 231 cm
64. Philip Taaffe. *Double Crab*. 2004. Mixed media on canvas.
65. Philip Taaffe. *Vertical Long Tall Fish*. 1997, Oil pigment on paper.
66. Ernst Haeckel. *Gamochonia richterkraken*. 1862, Lithograph.

67. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Changing Rooms 1* 2003. Woodblock print. 75 x 278 cm.
68. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Imagining The City 1*. 2003 Woodblock, paint, crayon. 50 x 360 cm.
69. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005 Collagraph, 120 x 160 cm.
70. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005. Collagraph, 120 x 80 cm.
71. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof* 2005. Etching, 120 x 80 cm
72. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Cosmogenesis I*. 2005 Intaglio collagraph, 220 x 80 cm.
73. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Hammada*. 2005. Intaglio collagraph. 240 x 90 cm.
74. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005 Collagraph, variable sizes
75. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Untitled*. 2005 Collagraph, woodblock print, paint, crayon 120 x 240 cm.
76. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof* 2005. Woodblock, water based pigment ink, variable sizes.
77. Stills from the Eames' short film *Powers of Ten* Zooms sequence from the outer galaxy to DNA nucleotides
78. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Evolution 1*. 2005. Intaglio collagraph, etching, linoprint. 120 x 270 cm. .
79. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Artist proof*. 2005. Latex print with collagraph overlay. 120 x 160 cm.
80. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Transmutation*. 2005. Intaglio collagraph, 80 x 180 cm.
81. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *First proof* 2005. Intaglio collagraph, 120 x 240 cm.
82. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *First proof*. 2005. Intaglio collagraph, 120 x 240 cm.
83. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Cosmogenesis II*. 2005. Intaglio collagraph. 120 x 240 cm
84. Yvonne Rees-Pagh Installation of selected works Sandy Bay Gallery, University of Tasmania, 2005.
85. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *From Ancient Tides*. 2005. Etching, collagraph, linoprint. 270 x 120 cm
86. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Cloning 1*. 2005 Collagraph, monoprint, mixed media. 120 x 180 cm.
87. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Chameleon*. 2006 Etching and silkscreen. 82 x 240 cm.
88. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Tongue Sponge* (Centre) 2006. Collagraph, silkscreen, 120 x 190 cm.
89. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Evolution 2*. 2006. Intaglio collagraph, silkscreen, etching. 120 x 210 cm
90. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Siphonochalina*. 2006 Etching, aquatint, sugar lift, silkscreen 120 x 270 cm.
91. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Puffer Fish*. 2006. Monoprint, silkscreen. 160 x 120 cm.
92. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Puffer Fish* 2007. Etching and silkscreen. 190 x 180 cm.
93. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Deadly Bloom*. 2007. Etching, woodblock, linocut, silkscreen 185 x 240 cm
94. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *Crocodile*. 2006. Etching, aquatint, 240 x 82 cm
95. Yvonne Rees-Pagh. *The Fertility Trap*. 2006. Etching, silkscreen, hand colouring. 120 x 220 cm
96. Yvonne Rees-Pagh *Wail Of The Feejee* 2007. Etching, silkscreen. 120 x 160 cm
97. Plimsoll Gallery Exhibition Photograph 1.
98. Plimsoll Gallery Exhibition Photograph 2.

CURRICULUM VITAE

YVONNE REES-PAGH

BORN Leeds UK 1951

EDUCATION

University of Tasmania School of Art 2004-07 Master Of Fine Art / Research scholarship
Monash University 2002-3 Master Of Visual Arts / High Distinction
Monash University 1998-99 Post Graduate Diploma of Arts (Visual Arts) / High Distinction
Masters Workshops: John Firth Smith (3 mnths), Max Miller Printmaker (3 mnths), Alun Leach-Jones (3 mnths), Fred Cress (4 mnths), Clifton Pugh (3 mnths) and Bernard Dunstan / Slade School of Art London (6 mnths)
Curtin University Perth Western Australia 1988 Post Graduate Studies in Printmaking
Claremont Technical College Perth Western Australia 1969-72 Advanced Certificate in Art and Design 1971 Diploma in Fine Arts 1972 with majors in painting and printmaking
The Graphic Arts Studio Leeds UK 1967-68 Apprenticeship

AWARDS

2007 Burnie Print Prize / Selected for exhibition
2005 Novosibirsk IV International Biennial Of Modern Graphics (Siberia) Award for Best Curated Exhibition
2005 Arts Tasmania / Artsbridge International Grant
2003 Novosibirsk III International Biennial Of Modern Graphics (Siberia) Premium 2003 Second Award
2003 Arts Tasmania / Artsbridge International Grant
1997 Australian Printmedia Award & Logan Art Award / Selected for exhibition
1986-93-94 Fremantle Print Award Finalist
1985 Printmakers Association of Western Australia Prize
1976 Undercroft Gallery University of WA / Highly Commended
1972 Mount Barker Painting Prize Winner / Perth WA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1996 Nisart Gallery / Launceston, Chapel Gallery / Prahran, Victoria
1995 *The End Of An Era.* / Lady Franklin Gallery Hobart
1993 Fremantle Arts Centre / Fremantle WA (with Sally Morgan), Perth Galleries / Perth WA
1992 New Pisage Gallery of Contemporary Art / St Petersburg, Omsk & Tomsk State Museums and Art Gallery / Russia
1991 Tomsk & Novosibirsk State Galleries and Museums / USSR (with Pippin Drysdale)
1990 International Galleries / Perth WA, Tomsk Museum and Art Gallery USSR
1989 Perth Galleries / Perth WA, Fremantle Arts Centre / Fremantle WA
1988 Greenhill Gallery / Perth WA (with Clifton Pugh)
1986 Perth Zoo Exhibition / Perth WA, Allendale Square Main Foyer / Perth WA
1984 CSA Gallery / Claremont WA
1974 Robin Phillips Gallery / Perth WA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2007 *Quartet.* Schoolhouse Gallery, Rosny Historic Centre
2006 *The Big Draw: Drawing Australia.* Tasmanian Museum And Art Gallery
2005 Novosibirsk IV International Biennial Of Modern Graphics / Siberia, Russia
2005 Mon Plaisier Gallery / Irkutsk, Russian Federation
2003 Novosibirsk III International Biennial Of Modern Graphics / Siberia, Russia
2001 ASAP Vanessa Wood Fine Art Gallery / Mosman NSW
1999-2001 *Pets, Prey and Predators.* Museum & Galleries Foundation of NSW (NETS Program), National Touring Exhibition: Mosman, Dubbo, Campbelltown City, Bathurst, Shepparton, Logan, Toowoomba & Grafton Regional Galleries
1998-2006 *Images of Tasmania.* / Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre
1998-99, 01-04 *The Hutchins Art Prize.* Selected for finalist exhibition
1998 *Rena Ellen Jones Print Award* Selected for finalist exhibition
1997 *Female Form* 6 Tas Women Printmakers / Nisart Gallery Launceston, Charles Hewitt Gallery / Sydney
 Australian Printmedia Awards Casula Powerhouse Art Centre selected for exhibition
1996 *Etch Your Art Out* Printworks Co-operative Exhibition / Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre
1995-97 Art Society Of Tasmania / Lady Franklin Gallery and Carnegie Gallery Hobart
1994 Ten Plus International Printmakers/ Petrozavodsk Russia, "Three Women Artists of Aust"/Perth Galleries
1992 *From Russia With Love.* Festival of Perth Exhibition with contemporary Russian artists / Perth Galleries
1991 *Born In The CSA.* / Claremont School of Art, "The Artist's Artist" Festival of Perth / Fremantle WA
1989 *Summer Visions* / Festival of Perth, *13 Women Printmakers.* / Perth WA, Greenhill Gallery / Perth WA
1988 Access Contemporary Gallery / Sydney NSW, Printmaking / Curtin University WA
1987 Dempsters Gallery / Melbourne Victoria
1986 *Women Artists of Western Australia.* / Perth College WA, *The Peace Show.* / Art Gallery of WA,
1980-85 Claremont School of Art Gallery / Claremont WA

REPRESENTED

Corporate Collections:

The Robert Holmes a Court Collection; Education Dept of Western Australia; Exploration House, Norseman Gold and Prudential Insurance Buildings, Hendry Rae & Court Solicitors / Perth WA, Jacob Allom Wade Architects & Medibank Private / Hobart

Private Collections in Australia, Russia, Japan, Argentina, USA, Germany and UK

Institutional Collections:

Edith Cowan University WA, Petrozavodsk Museum of Fine Arts Russia, Russian Museum St Petersburg, St Hilda Collection WA, Tomsk Art Gallery of the Soviet Union, Novosibirsk State Art Museum Siberia

Public Artworks:

Sculpture / Sacred Heart College Performing Arts Centre, Hobart.

Forecourt sculpture, paving and sun/security screen / Tasmanian Art for Public Buildings Scheme, Clarence High School

We Engage In Invisible Tides Underwater sculpture Waterman's Dock for National Science week (collaboration Jane Quon)

Entry mural and screen sculpture / Sexual Health Unit. 60 Collins Street Hobart / Department of Health & Human Services,

Animated sculpture / Dismal Swamp Interpretation Centre / Forestry Tasmania

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art and Australia Summer 1991 / Vol 29 No 2, p 153

A Dictionary Of Women Artists In Australia Edited by Max Germaine Craftsman House 1991, 385 - 386 (Robertson, Yvonne Diana)

New Art Seven: Profiles In Contemporary Australian Art Edited by Neville Drury Craftsman House 1992 pp 166-169

A Spirited Place Claremont School of Art 1993 p 99, p 133

The Australian Arts Diary 1994

Island Spring / Summer 1997 / Issue No 72/73, Cover "Leningrad"

Island Autumn 1998 / Issue No 74: Hammond, Victoria *The Peregrinations of Yvonne Pagh* pp 116-124

Art & Design in Western Australia: Perth Technical College 1900-2000 Edited by Dr Dorothy Erickson, TAFE College Publications

30 JUNE 2007